ADVENTUROUS RELIGION

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

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ADVENTUROUS RELIGION

and Other Essays

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ADVENTUROUS RELIGION

and Other Essays

By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

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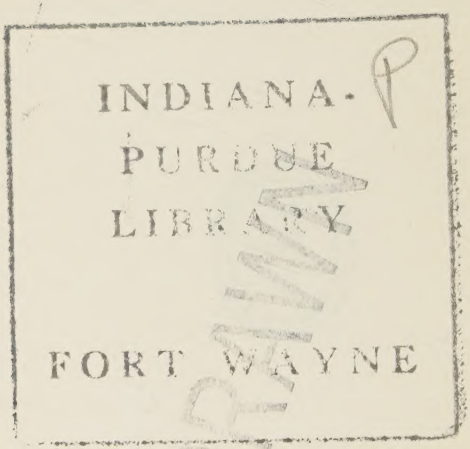

FOREWORD

This book is made up of essays on religion written in many places, from an island off the Maine coast to a steamer far up the Nile. In spite, however, of diversity in the environments from which they spring and variety in the themes of which they treat, the essays have a common center and properly belong in one book.

Their unifying background is the perplexing and challenging religious situation in America, created in part by the rise of fundamentalism, which has provoked so wide-spread a popular interest, alike within and without the churches. Neither in intention nor in tone are the papers controversial, but they have been written with the American churches clearly in mind, and with a desire, if possible, to help interpret a situation which must cause grave anxiety to all who are interested in the fortunes of religion.

Even deeper has been the writer's desire to separate religion altogether from the fickle ups and downs of theological and sectarian strife and to make it appear, as it is, an integral part of a wholesome life. Like love of beauty or human friendship, true religion springs out of elemental human

needs and has its permanent place in human experience. No man is the whole of himself until he possesses it.

The essays have appeared in Harper's Magazine, the Atlantic Monthly, or the Ladies' Home Journal, and alike to the editors of these publications and to their far-flung circles of readers I am indebted for manifold courtesies.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

August 1, 1926.

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ADVENTUROUS RELIGION

ADVENTUROUS RELIGION

I

A LETTER lies before me from a man who never has united with the Christian church. He cannot believe one of the highly philosophical doctrines on which he understands the churches to insist. He is reverent, spiritually minded, essentially religious, but he thinks that he must stay outside the church. To be sure, Jesus never mentioned the doctrine which constitutes his difficulty. It did not emerge in the form which my correspondent finds indigestible until centuries after Jesus lived. Nevertheless, wanting to join the fellowship of Christian people, where his sympathies are naturally at home, he remains outside the church.

This case, typical of more people than one likes to think, illustrates the peril which vital religion faces in the very organizations that at first were intended to express it. Religion at its source is personal adventure on a way of living. A new idea of life's spiritual mean-

ing, incarnate in a leader, summons men, and they cut loose from old entanglements and try the challenging venture. By the time religion has been thoroughly organized, however, it commonly loses that daring quality and becomes instead a stereotyped system of doctrine and institution to be passively accepted and believed.

This tendency, illustrated wherever religion exists, is unmistakable in Christianity. Christianity began in a great adventure. In those first days when the Master was presenting his way of living to the acceptance of men who had vision and courage enough to try it, discipleship to him was a costly spiritual exploit. In the New Testament it never loses that quality. The life to which Jesus summoned men required insight and bravery to undertake and fortitude to continue. Who at first could have dreamed that it ever would become in the eyes of multitudes a stiff and finished system to be passively received?

This development in historic Christianity from vitality to rigidity is clearly reflected in the changed meanings of the word 'faith.' Faith in the New Testament was a matter of

personal venturesomeness. It involved self-committal, devotion, loyalty, courage. If one arranges the New Testament in the chronological order of its documents and thus enters the book by way of some of Paul's epistles, he feels a thrilling quality in the movement which there had gotten under weigh. It was the most influential uprush of spiritual power in human history, and all the participants in it would have ascribed their inspiration to their faith. But it was not faith in formal creeds, for no creeds had yet been written; it was not faith in the New Testament, for the New Testament was not yet in existence; it was not faith in the church, for the church was as yet inchoate and unorganized. That primary faith which launched the Christian movement antedated creeds, book, and church. It was a personal relationship with Christ and what he stood for. It had not yet been formalized. It was vital and dynamic.

How different are the meanings that 'faith' soon acquired in Christianity! It ceased being primarily a daring thing—a mountain-mover, as Jesus said, or the victory that overcomes the world, as John called it. It was increasingly

drained of its more vital elements, it was stereotyped and systematized until it tended to mean the acceptance of creedal and institutional finalities long worked out and awaiting only the credence of the faithful. The climate sadly changed between the New Testament and the classic formulations of the church's doctrine. Who can imagine Jesus facing a formula like this about himself: "Consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; . . . Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence?"

II

One does not mean that any one is consciously to blame for thus systematizing and organizing life's experiences, squeezing the adventure out of them, translating them into formulas, and leaving them dessicated and unreal.

This is the fate of every lovely thing that human life creates. Music has its Beckmessers who, if they could, would let no Walther sing the Prize Song. Art suffers as religion does, and even courtesy can be imprisoned in a stately mannerism and need to be delivered like a sleeping princess from her castle.

One does mean, however, that when this fate befalls spiritual values indispensable to man's well-being, the time for reformation has arrived. And this fate has befallen religion in America to-day. Organized, institutionalized, creedalized, ritualized—religion has become for multitudes a stuffy and uninteresting affair. The Beckmessers are ruining it by the very means they take to preserve it. They are hiding from this new generation the arresting fact that religion is the most thrilling adventure that life offers.

The one utter heresy in Christianity is thus to believe that we have reached finality and can settle down with a completed system. That is the essential denial of the living God, who cannot have said his last word on any subject or have landed his last hammer-blow on any task. It is strange that in religion we so desperately

cling to static, settled, authoritative finality as though that were our safety and our strength. In no other realm should we dream of such an attitude. Says Froude, the historian, "If medicine had been regulated three hundred years ago by Act of Parliament; if there had been Thirty-nine Articles of Physic, and every licensed practitioner had been compelled, under pains and penalties, to compound his drugs by the prescriptions of Henry the Eighth's physician, Doctor Butts, it is easy to conjecture in what state of health the people of this country would at present be found."

Why should we suppose that the fortunes of religion in the mind and experience of man are under a different set of psychological laws than the fortunes of medicine or art or music? In all realms, religion included, human life is creative. It spontaneously wells up into new insights and endeavors. It outgrows its old formulations as a child its early clothes. Continuity in any realm of human interest is not to be found in its formulations but in its abiding life. Health is a permanent problem and medicine goes on. Beauty is a deathless interest and art abides. The spiritual life of man in its rela-

tionship with the Eternal is an unescapable human interest and religion is indestructible. But it is an adventure both of life and thought. All its formulas, summarizing experience up to date, are sign-posts, not boundary-lines; and when Christianity forgets that, becomes preservative instead of creative, rests in assumed finalities instead of daring new sallies of the spirit, retreats into supposed citadels instead of taking the open road, it not only is false to its historic origin in Christ, who did the very opposite, but by psychological necessity it dooms itself to stagnation and decay.

III

So far is this from being disturbing, that only through a clear apprehension of it are we likely to regain anything resembling the thrill, liveliness and ardor of apostolic Christianity which so daringly struck its tents and ventured into new kinds of thought and action. Certainly, it is the lack of this which in part causes the dangerous alienation of the younger generation from organized Christianity. Many a young man and woman to-day who is not a

Christian would like to be one. But often the churches do not help. Preachers have a way of thinking of Christianity as a whole, of taking it *en bloc*. They treat it as a carefully articulated system of beliefs and practices. They present it as it has stiffened into settled finalities. They come to youth with this sum total of Christianity and plead with them to accept this system of thought and practice and become Christians. Some preachers even say explicitly that the whole complex affair stands or falls together and that one must take it all or have nothing.

Many a youth, however, who may wistfully desire to be a Christian, finds such an approach impossible. He cannot start with wholesale acceptance of a finished system. He cannot begin by believing what he does not yet perceive the truth of. It is as psychologically absurd to expect a youth as precedent to becoming a Christian to accept this institutionalized and creedalized *bloc* called Christianity as it would be to demand credence of the whole curriculum before a boy could become a Freshman.

Jesus' first followers were called disciples,

learners; and a learner begins where he is. When Jesus met a man like Zacchaeus he did not foist on him a system of theology and institutionalism, both because he did not have one and because Zacchaeus would not have understood it if he had. He dealt with men one at a time. Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the rich young ruler, Peter, James, John—to no two of them did he give the same prescription. He had no predetermined mold into which he tried to run them all. He had no system to which all had to subscribe before they could follow him. He invited each, starting where each was, to begin a spiritual adventure in a hitherto-untried way of living.

The first disciples started thus by living under the mastership of Jesus and came to a theory afterward based on their experience. We often go at the matter from the opposite end. We call on men to believe some orthodox interpretation of Jesus, insisting that only in holding this philosophy concerning Jesus is there salvation or motive power for Christian living. That method of approach is psychologically false. It asks men first to accept a formula instead of summoning them to under-

take a life. It has led to endless unreality and hypocrisy. It is responsible for multitudes of people holding a theory and mistakenly supposing that thereby they have achieved a life. It has issued even in some who insist that all *bona-fide* goodness springs from holding their theory and is dependent on it, whereas any one can see that plenty of people who hold another theory altogether or, it may be, none at all, have more sweetness and light in their characters, more high-mindedness, integrity, usefulness, and essential Christianity than the strict theorists have touched the fringes of.

As one who himself holds a high interpretation of Jesus and sympathetically understands what the Nicene fathers were driving at when they lifted their victorious cry that "true God of true God" has come to us in him, I should like to hear more Christian preachers addressing youth to-day somewhat as follows:

We want you to be genuinely Christian. But as precedent to that it would not occur to us to demand that you should believe even about Christ what we believe. What we see in Christ is not the question. The question is, What do you see in Christ? Surely, you do not mean that you see

nothing to challenge your conscience, rebuke your life, summon your devotion! Will you start with that, follow that as far as it carries you, and then go on if you see more? Interpose no objections based on your disbelief in this theological theory or that. No one is asking you just now to believe them. Start where you are and follow what you do see. Christianity is an adventure. Like friendship it is capable of being intellectually formulated, but primarily it is an experiment in living to be tried. If the Master himself saw you perceiving in him no more than you do perceive but wanting to try the venture of following him and applying his principles to life, he would rise on you like the sun in his encouragement, saying, Start where you are.

IV

All experiences, when they have been tried out, explored, enjoyed, tend to get themselves expressed in formulas. We precipitate a living thing into the shorthand of an abstract statement. Even love has its creeds, although, happily, they have been expressed in poetry. Read the "Sonnets from the Portuguese" and see. But a man need not postpone love until he can subscribe to that finished expression of perfected experience. He never will subscribe to

it with vital understanding if he does postpone the experiment itself. Love is an adventure.

So is prayer, loving one's enemies, being sincere. So is discovering spiritual resources which we can tap and thus be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." So is repentance, forgiveness, restitution, and inward moral conquest. So is practical working faith in God and love for all sorts and conditions of men. So is the application of the principles of Jesus to racial, industrial, and international problems. Christianity is a stirring and costly adventure in personal character and social relationships. Theological theories can help. They can justify, clarify, direct, and extend the adventure. But they do not come first; they come last. They are the intellectual formulations of the adventure, not its primary cause, and whenever they grow stiff and intractable, become obsolete and deterrent, no longer help the ventures of the spirit but hinder and confuse, they must give way to other forms of thought that will illumine and guide. For at all hazards the adventure of spiritual living must go on. That is indis-

pensable to man's real life. That is genuine religion. And the tragedy of organized religion is that so often this adventure has to face, not only natural enemies in human carnality and skepticism, but artificial enemies in the petrified expressions of religion itself. Like a river dammed by its own ice, religion is held back by its congealed formulations.

This is the *raison d'être* of that movement in Christianity to-day which is seeking an "inclusive church." We are not careless of intellectual statements of faith. We suspect that soon enough—perhaps all too soon—we are likely to get formulations of religion in modern terms which our children, to use Phillips Brooks' figure, will have to beat back again like crust into the batter. Our formulations will be no more final than our fathers'. But in the meantime our churches ought to welcome all who have faith enough to try the spiritual adventure of Christian living. The exclusive features of the denominations, almost altogether non-spiritual as they are and remote from any influence on moral character, are a burden on the religious life of the nation. It

never can be altogether well until they are gone and the churches become once more the natural home of all those in the community who in the spirit of Jesus wish to treat life seriously in terms of spiritual vision and valor.

MORAL AUTONOMY OR DOWNFALL

I

An alert and spirited reviewer, himself a scientist, recently laid violent hands on Professor J. Arthur Thomson's new book, Science and Religion. What bothered him was not so much that the biologist of Aberdeen leaves the door wide open to the possibility of intelligent religious faith; he was vexed that Professor Thomson in particular, or anybody in general, should desire religious faith at all and waste time upon it. He had gone past discussing the credibility of religion and was skeptical of its desirability. Why, he asked, should anybody want to believe in God?

Typical as this is of certain limited areas of thought in the new generation, it illustrates the disastrous separation that has taken place between religion and life. Believers must expect, and should be prepared to meet, as their forefathers always have met, antagonists who doubt the truth of religion. But when men

begin doubting the usefulness, the desirability, the practical need of religion, the church should engage in anxious self-examination. To cause that something calamitous must have happened in the current presentation of religion's meaning.

That something calamitous has happened seems plain. It is indicated not so much in learned reviews and university lectures as in popular attitudes. The wide-spread neglect of institutional religion, the patent endeavor of multitudes of people, unconscious of serious loss, to get on without any religion at all, the wistful sense of spiritual vacancy wanting to be filled but last of all thinking of a church as the place to fill it, the idealistic movements, among the noblest of our time, whose associations with religion are remote and tenuous if they exist at all—these and other elements in the present situation bear witness to a crucial fact: contemporary human life, on the one side, and contemporary religion, on the other, have been drifting apart.

In this fact lies one explanation of the present turmoil in the churches. The restlessness of maladaptation is making them very un-

happy. Conscious of possessing spiritual goods necessary to man's fullest life, they are baffled by inherited forms of thought and institution which have lost touch with the vital interests and habitual thinking of the people. Feeling thus out of joint with their time, some accuse the new generation of being sons of Belial, some urge the reformation of the church, some blame education and cry out against the colleges, some bewail the disturbance of old doctrines which used to function as vehicles of the spirit and, presumably, should do so still, some invent new religions to slake a thirst which nothing but religion satisfies, and in general the painful symptoms of impending change afflict the house of God. And behind all symptoms is the basic fact that religion and life have been drifting apart.

This situation, attended by many obvious perils to the churches, has one outstanding and disastrous consequence: it makes religion seem utterly negligible. That some should be skeptical, denying all truth to religion, is to be expected; that some should be carnal hedonists, declining the moral ideals of religion, is an immemorial difficulty; but that many should re-

fuse to credit religion with any desirable contribution to life is a staggering fact.

To folk who know religion in its depths, the one most certain truth about it is its indispensable gift to rich and radiant living. That contribution is the ultimate test of any religion and of its power to survive. The churches must face that test to-day with searching of heart if they would regain contact with their generation and make their message seem worthy of heed. Whatever in religion makes for rich and radiant living is worth while. Whatever in religion is alien from that, or negligible in its effect upon it, is of no account. All doctrines and institutions of religion must ultimately meet this test, no matter how bitterly ecclesiastics bewail lost icons and taboos, abandoned shibboleths and polities. Two questions to-day face every proposition and custom of religion: first, is it intelligently defensible; second, does it contribute to man's abundant life?

II

This intimate relationship between healthy religion and wholesome living may be seen in

our present crying need of moral autonomy in our citizenship. We have gone about as far in modern civilization as we can go, trying to approach the human problem from without, and unless we can approach the human problem from within, we are headed toward perilous days. The influence of the environmentalists has been tremendous. To them nothing has seemed so important as setting human life in a matrix of fortunate circumstance. Theoretical science has revealed the large effect of environment on all developing organisms, and applied science has incalculably increased our power to alter environments to suit our human purposes. More and more on this basis we have been endeavoring to solve the human problem from without.

To-day critical and sometimes withering doubt falls, not on the necessity of this procedure, but on its adequacy. The eugenists know that the human problem is finally insoluble unless we start with it before environment has had a chance to play upon the individual at all. We are what we are, they say, more because of our heritage from within than because of our environment from without.

To this balancing of the scales against the too-great weight of the environmentalists, the man of spiritual insight must also bring his contribution. The restoration of the inward approach to the control of life has to-day become in America a public question of the first magnitude. The legalists have made it such. They also, and often with wild exaggeration, have approached life from without. The merest tyro begins to understand that the endeavor to make people good by law is being carried to ridiculous extremes. For a generation and more our legislatures have been acting under the apparent assumption that the springs of righteousness in the community are not inward but governmental, not spiritual but externally regulative, and the assumption is bringing poor results.

This protest implies no doubt of the necessity and moral value of law. We pay a heavy price for our complex civilization in that the more complicated it becomes the more laws must be enforced. As with traffic on the streets, so with life—the more congested it is the more rules must be obeyed. But just because we must have laws, and unhappily must have more

of them the more complicated civilization grows, the more we need to guard ourselves against leaning on law for the safety and progress of society.

Who can have lived during these last few years, with laws piled on laws, governing every aspect of man's life, while all the time lawlessness grows more rampant underneath, without perceiving that not law but moral autonomy—the desire and capacity of the individual citizen to govern himself from within—is the real underpinning of the state and that, lacking this, the whole superstructure of legalism may yet come clattering in ruin about our ears? If we cannot secure citizens willing and able to govern themselves from within, we shall not have citizens whom we can govern from without.

If America should ever fail, if after the splendor of her start and the unparalleled marvel of her opportunity she should fall on ruin, the trouble would not be lack of external, legal regulation. The trouble would be lack of moral autonomy—the failure in individual citizens of those motives, sanctions, convictions, faiths, and ideals which enable a man to govern

himself from within. The profoundest needs of America are real education and real religion —the two forces that approach life not from without but from within.

This means no slurring of the importance of rectified environment and just laws, no neglect of the crucial significance of scientific eugenics applied to the problem of population. These things we ought to do and not to leave the other undone. For these things alone, however well performed, would leave the human problem not only unsolved but, it may be, more bedeviled than it was before, unless the moral autonomy of the individual were established with ever-increasing capacity to meet the increased strain of modern life. The pillar around which the blind Samson of our new science, applied to material aims, may yet get his arms is our power of inward spiritual self-direction, and when that goes everything else that we have built will go with it.

III

Our fathers used to phrase this inward approach to life in terms of the soul: its sin, its

salvation, and its destiny. Their hymns concerned—

> A never-dying soul to save,
> And fit it for the sky.

For the most part, modern congregations sing such eighteenth-century words without the vivid and picturesque meanings which the words conveyed to eighteenth-century minds. We are not otherworldly in our aspirations. We expect to die, but we spend little time thinking of it, and fitting a never-dying soul for the sky is certainly not the way in which a typical member of the younger generation would describe his major and dominant ambition.

Nevertheless, modern as we are, and plainly requiring other frameworks of thought and modes of expression to make genuinely articulate our spiritual experiences and aspirations, we need not suppose that by any modernity we have evaded the necessity of an inward approach to the problem of living. If we dislike eighteenth-century hymns we may have twentieth-century substitutes, as in Edna St. Vincent Millay's Renascence:

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That can not keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

If it pleases us better, we may speak about the soul in such terms as these and leave behind us the eighteenth-century's otherworldliness. But we still are dealing with the same age-long, fundamental, human problem—the successful handling of a man's own life from within.

Here is the real line of discrimination between the realm of physical science on the one side and of religion on the other. The task of physical science is to master the latent resources of the external universe. Magnificent have been its achievements there. Still more splendid will they be. But we could get along for many years with no more accomplishments in

that realm than we already have. We could muddle through with only as much steam and electricity under our control as we have now. What we cannot do is to muddle through much farther in Western civilization with no more control than we now have over the inward lives of men. The wild, physical universe—we will tame that yet! We will harness its forces, saying to this one, Go, and it will go, and to that one, Come, and it will come. But the inner world of man's life, with its ignorance, prejudice, bitterness, pessimism, its instability, waywardness, passion, and sin—shall we ever bring that into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Shall we ever make that wholesome, intelligent, reverent, unselfish, and brotherly?

That is the deepest single question in civilization to-day.

IV

To suppose that this central spiritual task of human life can be achieved on an irreligious basis seems to me a contradiction in terms. The task itself in its very nature is essentially religious. This is what religion means. To be

sure, it is possible to define religion in terms of early stages in its evolution, to identify it with magic or superstitious reverence for taboos, or an historic stage of doctrinal development; and some indulge in that cheap and easy method of defamation. They might as well scoff at astronomy because it once was astrology, or outlaw chemistry because it came from alchemy. Religion, like every other interest in human life, dealing with reality and growing in the apprehension of it, has shown endless capacity for change, evolving as other human activities of mind and spirit evolve, never to be adequately described in terms of its chrysalis when at last it has gotten wings to fly.

Religion at its best has supplied—and it can now supply—the motives, faiths, insights, hopes, convictions by which men inwardly come to terms with themselves, gain spiritual ascendency over their baser elements, achieve peace and power, and come off more than conquerors. Religion means the achievement of such a view of life, its source, its meaning, its destiny, such personal relationship, moreover, with the Spirit from whom our spirits come, and such fellowship with ourselves, with other

people, and with God as will furnish inward spiritual dynamic for radiant and triumphant living.

To tell men that they are accidental collocations of physical atoms; that what they think is spirit in them is as much a chemico-mechanical product as phosphorescence on the sea and essentially as transient; that they are the passive results of heredity and environment, and by them are as mechanically determined as is a locomotive by its steam pressure and its rails; that they have no spiritual source, no abiding spiritual meaning, no spiritual destiny, and no control over their own character or development—that is sheer irreligion and not only can it not solve the problem of which we have been speaking, but if it were logical (as fortunately it seldom is) it would not even try. It would leave the matter helplessly to be decided by the blind action of physical forces that are supposed automatically to control the universe and us within it.

By every step that a man moves away from this thoroughgoing irreligion toward interest in, serious concern about, and practical endeavor to deal with the problem of moral auton-

omy, he comes that much nearer to religion. If he undertakes the problem earnestly he is thereby in the thick of religion. He already is discovering in human life spiritual values which he wishes to conserve, for the beautifying and purifying of which he is seriously concerned, without whose development and effective dominance he sees no hope for society. He already is thinking of the central meaning of life in terms, not of the external world, but of the internal world, with its possibilities of goodness, truth, and beauty. That in itself is in so far religious. And if, as some of us feel sure, we not only intelligently may, but intelligently must go farther to find in this internal world of spirit the revelation of the Reality, whose we are, and whom we may find liberty in serving, we cannot long travel this road of inward approach to life before we find ourselves "not far from the kingdom of God."

Coming at life by way of a merely inherited religion is a played-out procedure for most thoughtful people. But coming at religion by way of life, and a deep desire inwardly to live it well, is a procedure full of endless promise. As soon as one strikes that road he finds him-

self in the highway where the seers and prophets of the spirit always have walked and, above all, he can distinguish clearly there the footsteps of the Son of man.

This desire for inward peace and power, overflowing in useful and radiant living, is humanity's profoundest characteristic. It is everywhere to-day alive and urgent. And the churches at the center of their Gospel have the means of its satisfaction. Why will they so generally insist on specializing in irrelevancies? Why so often, like football players who continue a scrimmage after the ball has been carried far down the field, do they keep up a mêlée at a point from which the vital needs of their generation long since have departed?

I BELIEVE IN MAN

I

Some anxious inquirers are in difficulty about their religion because they insist on starting their religion at the end farthest away from them. They strain after a cosmic theory, a belief in God as an hypothesis to explain the universe, and often they have a desperate time getting it. One may feel keenly the importance of such an inclusive cosmic faith and yet may see the necessity, in some puzzled minds, of being willing to start at the near end of the religious question if the far end proves at first too difficult. In some cases, if a man is having trouble endeavoring to say, "I believe in God," he may get light starting closer home and endeavoring to say, "I believe in man."

This affirmation is a basic article of the Christian faith if the Founder of Christianity is to be taken seriously. Indeed, it was this emphasis in Jesus' ministry which to his contemporaries seemed unique and challenging. They were disturbed little, if at all, by his

teaching about God. When he taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," he upset no current orthodoxies. When he told them that God could be interpreted in terms of human fatherhood at its best, or pictured God as sending rain upon just and unjust, no one objected. He could have gone on through a long and peaceful lifetime saying what he pleased about God, but he was hated and crucified because of his attitude toward man.

In his first recorded sermon he raised this crucial issue and he never stopped raising it. When in his home synagogue at Nazareth he preached for the first time, and for the last time too, he laid bare the immorality of the current racial attitude. He pointed out that, with many widows in Israel, Elijah had served especially a widow of Sidon and that, with plenty of lepers at home, Elisha had healed a Syrian. On the threshold of his ministry he made explicit his impatience with contemporary racial exclusiveness and his intention to consider man as man "for a' that and a' that." They nearly killed him for the heresy. They would not have been disturbed by his teaching about God,

but his teaching about man awakened all their slumbering ire.

It was this aspect of Jesus' message which always angered his enemies. The three most familiar parables he ever told, those of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, were a spirited defense of his attitude toward man. The outlawed publicans and sinners were gathering about him and the officials of organized religion were complaining, "This man receiveth sinners," when he told those stories and, popular misinterpretation to the contrary notwithstanding, they are not primarily pictures of God at all. The housewife who would not stop her search for the lost coin, the shepherd who would not cease his quest for the wandering sheep, the father who waited with undiscourageable welcome for the prodigal are all pictures of the attitude of Jesus himself toward neglected and forgotten men. The three stories are his vivid and passionate defense of his own attitude.

Always this was the center of the controversy which swirled around him. His first commandment, about loving God, awakened no question, but his emphasis on the second,

loving one's neighbor as oneself, at once brought on discussion and in the end brought down on the young lawyer who started it the crushing story of the Good Samaritan. As that lawyer turned away with "Go, and do thou likewise," ringing in his ears, it is evident that he was not upset by Jesus' teaching about God but that he was anxiously upset by Jesus' teaching about man.

When at last Jesus began courageously unfolding the latent implications of this attitude, when he explicitly insisted that even the sabbath—most sacred of institutions—was made for man and not man for the sabbath, and that no sabbath law would keep him from serving man, the storm broke. This teaching and not his theology was the crux of his offending. He even said that at the judgment seat no technical, ecclesiastical reasons for perdition and salvation would obtain, but that human service to the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and imprisoned would prove the one passport to the favor of the Eternal.

In the end they crucified him because of this uncompromising humanitarianism and the con-

flict which it involved with their traditions. I often wonder how a clear and unmistakable statement about that came to be left out of the official formulations of Christian faith, as though they could be genuinely Christian without it.

II

Jesus' attitude toward human personality can be briefly described as always seeing people in terms of their possibilities. He habitually looked at men in terms of what they might become. We often do that with children, but the marvel of the Master was that he did it with most unlikely people. He saw prodigals in far countries and women taken in adultery, and thought of them in terms of their moral possibilities. A disciple might cry, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," but Jesus answered, "Come ye after me, and I will *make you* fishers of men." People might grow bad, like the woman of Samaria, or encrusted in tradition, like academic Nicodemus, but Jesus thought of what they might yet grow to be. As the Fourth Gospel put it, he was constantly

giving to those who would receive him "power to become."

To be sure, he was no sentimentalist. He could not well have been a sentimentalist in his attitude toward men in view of what men did to him. Enduring the contumely and public brutality visited upon him, Jesus could have been under no illusions as to human nature. He condemned hypocrisy and cruelty with scathing words and cried, "Beware of men." But like fresh springs beside the sea which rise renewed after the salt tides have gone over them, the Master's confidence in the potential worth of human personality was ultimately undiscourageable. In this realm he has been the supreme seer.

Indeed, this attitude of Jesus toward personality is one of the major springs of Western democracy. Democracy is not simply politics, election by a majority, government by a parliament. It is also the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people and that if the doors of opportunity are thrown open wide enough surprising consequences will come from unlikely sources. We must not let the eugenists, with their lurid and needed warn-

ing about our folly in killing off the best breeds and multiplying from the worst, blind our eyes to this other, hopeful fact. Shakspere was the son of a bankrupt butcher and a woman who could not write her name. Beethoven was the son of a consumptive mother and a father who was a confirmed drunkard. Schubert was the son of a peasant father and a mother in domestic service. Michael Faraday was born over a stable, his father an invalid blacksmith, his mother a common drudge, and his education began by selling newspapers on London's streets. In France they selected by popular vote the greatest Frenchman who ever lived—not Napoleon, but Louis Pasteur, maker of modern medicine, the son of a tanner. Democracy is not simply a political system; it is a moral movement and it springs from adventurous faith in human possibilities. With all its futilities, blunders, and tragic ineptitudes, we must everlastingly believe in it, for unsuspected possibilities in common folk do appear when the doors of opportunity are opened wide.

In a real sense, this insight was Jesus' specialty. His estimate of human personality, its divine origin, its spiritual nature, its supreme

value, its boundless possibilities, has been rightly called his most original contribution to human thought. And, in consequence, we know by a sure instinct that wherever a man holds this estimate of human worth and lives as though it were true, he is a man whom Jesus would approve. There are many places in modern Christianity where one wonders what the Founder would think. In great conventicles of worship with elaborate liturgies and gorgeous ceremonies, one sometimes wonders what Jesus would think. In ecclesiastical assemblies where men rally around partisan standards and grow enthusiastic over sectarian shibboleths, one wonders what Jesus would think. When Christians malign Christians about divergences of theological opinion that never yet made any difference to character, one wonders what Jesus would think. But there is one place where uncertainty vanishes. Wherever a man cares for men, gives himself in service to them, sees beneath forbidding exteriors hidden possibilities, wherever in any church, or in none, comes the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi and Father Damien, of John Howard, David Livingstone, Horace Mann, General

Booth—there one is certain what Jesus would think.

III

So basic is this faith in man in the religion of Christianity's Founder that there is no road to his view of God which does not start with his view of human personality. It is usually put the other way: believe in God, accept the church's faith in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and as a natural and spontaneous consequence you will take right attitudes toward men. Familiar as that approach is, it is fundamentally false.

Historically, it breaks down. The contemporary enemies of Jesus believed in God and in their most bigoted and inhuman deeds thought that they did God service. Any day they would have faced martyrdom for their faith in God, but they took no such attitudes toward humanity as Jesus did.

Experimentally, this approach to altruism by way of theology breaks down. We all know people who believe in God, who would no more be thought atheists than anarchists, but who in

their human relationships are among the most undesirable citizens in the community. Hard as flint, arrogant as Lucifer, they walk among us believing in their God.

Moreover, this familiar formula which makes one's humaneness dependent on one's theology breaks down Biblically. Shall we say that a man first loves God and then spontaneously will love his neighbor well? But the New Testament reverses the order. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." Shall we say that a man first is forgiven by God and then naturally overflows into magnanimous relations with his fellows? But the New Testament puts it the other way around. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Shall we say that the worship of God comes first and love of man inevitably follows? The New Testament takes pains to state the contrary. "If, therefore, thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer

thy gift." Shall we say that a right attitude toward Christ is the precedent condition of a right attitude toward men? But the New Testament says that it is impossible to take a right attitude toward Christ without taking an unselfish attitude toward men. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." We may think as we please about the matter, but there is no question as to what the Bible thinks. In the New Testament there is no road to the heart of God that does not lead through the heart of man.

With Jesus, in particular, no other highway except this one, which Seeley long ago called his "enthusiasm for humanity," brings one to his idea of God. We may deduce God from the vastness and order of the external universe; we may philosophize about God until we are intellectually convinced that theism is true; we may accept the creeds of Christendom as supernaturally deposited; but in no such way shall we reach Jesus' characteristic idea of the Divine. Like Millet, the painter, who picked up Normandy peasants that nobody had thought worth painting and in his Angelus and

Gleaners made them strong and beautiful so that we cross the sea to look at them, so Jesus habitually treated human personality. Let a man start with that spirit and then rise from his care for men and his faith in them to think of the Eternal as the Good-will behind his good-will, the Purpose behind his purpose, and thereby he has gotten at the distinguishing attribute of Jesus' God. To God through love for man was the road by which the Master reached his unique heights of spiritual vision. He explicitly described it himself: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven!"

To be sure, the other side of the matter is true also: a vital faith in God so experimentally attained reacts powerfully on life. Religious faith in this regard is like scientific faith. A physicist in some special realm proves the uniformity of law and then moves up from his limited area of experiment to the comprehensive faith that the whole universe is law-abiding —a proposition which cannot be proved. Returning, then, with that inclusive conviction about the nature of the universe, he finds all

his work illumined, and is sustained by his cosmic faith when, in this area or that, he cannot find the law or is baffled by apparent lawlessness. So a Christian rises in his thought through man to God and returning brings with him a conviction about the nature of the moral universe which sustains and steadies him. But he must go through that door of human sympathy and not climb up some other way if he is to understand Jesus. He who tries to say, "I believe in God," without knowing what it means to say, "I believe in man," has not come within reaching distance of the Christian God. An agnostic who reverently shares Jesus' attitude toward man has a fairer claim to the name Christian than a baptized pagan, with a correct theology, whose human relationships are untouched by the spirit of the Master.

IV

When, therefore, men say that Christianity has not been tried, they are speaking truly. Many imitations have been tried but, except in limited areas, not this kind of Christianity, and a large part of our Western civilization to-day

is an explicit and organized denial of it. The critical struggle for the dominance of Christian principles lies in this realm. The present protagonists of orthodoxy are locating Antichrist in the wrong place. To change one's forms of thought as new knowledge comes, to see the creative activity of the Eternal in terms of evolution instead of fiat, or to make the spiritual quality of Christ, not a miracle of supernatural birth, one's reason for reverencing him—such things are not Antichrist.

The real Antichrist is to be found in another place. All irreverent treatment of human personality in individual relationships or social institutions—that is essentially Antichrist. That is an utter denial of the Christian God and of Jesus as his revealer. Racial prejudice, social pride, industrial cruelty, war, personal selfishness and lust—these are the real sins against the real God, and they have one common quality: they treat human personality with contempt.

To be a Christian is a searching matter and it starts close at home. If a man is having difficulty in beginning his religion at the far end, let him not use that as an excuse for irre-

ligion. He can at least begin at the near end. Celsus, the pagan, in the third century attacked Christianity's excessive valuation of the human soul and the idea that God takes special interest in man. That attack shows real insight. That is touching the nerve of the matter. That pagan knew Christianity better than many Christians have known it. Eliminate his scorn and the rest is true: the root of Christianity is reverence for personality and faith that God must care for the spiritual values of his universe.

ON BEING A REAL SKEPTIC

I

No one who has any capacity to call out responses from undergraduates can go to a college campus to-day and present the cause of religion without getting some vigorous protests against faith. I do not mean protests simply against faith in this particular doctrine or that, but against faith in general. A typical college youth spurns faith. He asserts his unwillingness to believe anything. He prides himself on accepting only the demonstrably true.

One of the chief criticisms, however, to be passed on many such young skeptics is that they are not thoroughgoing in their skepticism. They toy with it, play about it, go as far in it as their whims lead them, but, as for complete renunciation of faith and exclusive reliance on demonstrable propositions, they do not remotely approach their ideal. Nor is the reason difficult to see. Complete skepticism is harder to reach than the North Pole and, once

there, one would find living even more impossible.

Faith as religion uses it is generally the first object of attack when the youth begins to achieve the skeptical attitude. Nor can religion complain at this for she has been notoriously guilty of making faith synonymous with credulity. When Alice faced the Queen's assertion that she was one hundred one years, five months, and one day old, she cried, "I can't believe *that!*" "Can't you?" said the Queen. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes." That is no caricature of a large amount of so-called faith as the church has enjoined it and religious people practised it. Many folk to-day still draw a long breath, shut their eyes, and believe the Bible "from cover to cover," or commit their minds, in fee simple to possess and own, to some creed or church. They call this faith, but it is to faith what soothsaying astrology on a side street is to astronomy—its perversion and degradation. Real faith, as Ruskin said, is veracity of insight.

Intelligent religion uses faith as science does. In any physical realm investigation starts with a mass of apparently unconnected facts be-

tween which nobody knows the rational relationships. Like the contents of a school-boy's pocket, they are a miscellany of unassociated elements. Then into the presence of this salmagundi comes a great mind. He has more than sight; he has insight. He looks through the facts and beyond them into their relationships. He seizes with his imagination the principle of their unity. He leaps to an hypothesis that may conceivably explain and systematize them. He cannot at first prove it, but he believes it. That hypothesis years afterward may still be incapable of complete demonstration and yet be the working basis on which all scientists proceed. That leap of the mind through the facts and beyond them to grasp their significance, organize them, and so make order out of chaos, is intellectual faith.

Scientific faith grasped the new astronomy before telescopes were strong enough to prove it, unified the cosmos under the law of gravitation while there were inexplicable facts against it, asserted the universal uniformity of law, although even yet a leading biologist can call it a "gigantic assumption," and to-day, in area

after area, ventures into unexplored territory on the basis of veracity of insight.

A new eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews could be written on the heroes of scientific faith. By faith Sir John Mandeville in 1356 said, "I tell you, certainly, that men may go all round the world, as well under as above, and return to their country." By faith Columbus reached land by sailing westward although mankind had been incredulous about it. By faith Newton grasped the idea of gravitation although he was the first to guess it. By faith Darwin seized on an hypothesis which arranged and explained facts else inexplicable, although it took a daring venture of the mind to do it. These also are heroes of faith.

That they dealt honestly and tirelessly with facts, studied them with patient industry and at all costs and hazards endeavored to achieve the truth about them is no denial of their exercise of faith. Faith is an indispensable way of dealing with facts. It goes through facts into their meanings; it dares venturesome interpretations of them and so systematizes them and gets order out of them. It is not blindness

and credulity; it is vision plus daring. As a recent scientific writer put it, faith is a "spirit of trusting adventure, often with little to justify it, that has been the mainspring of all progress, mental and material."

II

One of the best pieces of advice, therefore, that can be given the incipient skeptic—especially if he is confining his skepticism to spiritual realities or is displaying pertness and flippancy, which are the young skeptic's mumps and measles—is to insist, not that he give up skepticism, but that he go through with it to its logical end and see where it lands him. Chaos is the destination. For faith has been involved in every step that humanity has taken away from a disordered existence, whimsical, without unity, sense, or reason, toward a meaningful universe seen steadily and seen whole.

This achievement of order out of chaos is the central business of man's intellect. As man's mind first saw this world, it was a chaotic mess, capricious, unreliable, without or-

ganizing principles to give it sense or laws to unify its operations. No connections were visible between any one thing and another, and even after history became articulate some still ascribed childbirth to no other cause than supernatural intervention and thought that everything which moved in heaven above or on the earth beneath was a separate being with a will to do as it pleased. Into this topsy-turvy, harum-scarum world man came and brought with him an unappeasable impatience with chaos. He could not live in chaos; he must have order. Upon the great adventure to discover here a rational universe he launched his mind, and the story of the hazard and heroism, the failures and triumphs of that crusade makes up the intellectual history of man.

It is not enough to say that in this process man merely discovered the truth about the universe. What man has done is more creative than that. He has in a sense constructed the unity he believes in. He has invented mathematical formulas that resemble nothing in the external world. He has framed scientific laws tentatively summarizing in mental shorthand the observed uniformities of nature.

He has made vast astronomical generalizations that are beyond human demonstration. In all this he believes that he has achieved some real approximation to the truth about the disordered world which he is trying to conquer with his mind. This aspect of man, puny of stature, the helpless prey of untoward circumstance from bacteria to earthquakes, standing up to confront the universe, insisting that, as for him, chaos shall not reign there, that he will see through chaos and make order out of it, is altogether the most amazing sight that creation offers.

Behind the whole intellectual adventure of mankind, therefore, is faith—the basic faith that chaos cannot be the last word in any realm. Faith is not an excrescence on the mental life. Faith is not a flimsy patch to cover the intellect's nakedness when the solid garment of knowledge gives out. The fundamental necessity of faith is no more peculiar to the saints than to the scientists, as Huxley recognized when he said, "As for the strong conviction that the cosmic order is rational, and the faith that, throughout all durations, unbroken order has reigned in the universe, I not only accept

it, but I am disposed to think it the most important of all truths."

III

This tremendous assumption of nature's law-abiding uniformity which underlies all science and is for science, as Huxley said, the most important of all truths, is a perfect example of faith. Its devotees hold it against all comers and in spite of all adverse appearances, because by it alone can chaos be mentally conquered and civilized. If a man projects himself back into the world as it appeared before this gigantic doctrine of law-abiding uniformity occupied men's minds, looks with naïve eyes on that strangely jumbled, lawless salmagundi of a world with innumerable, diverse elements going each its own way, he must be impressed with the daring insight and induction combined which it took to subsume all that wild disarray under a single concept like uniformity of law. That concept is still incapable of complete demonstration. No one with absolute certainty can tell how far the objective truth of it goes. It is primarily the

insistence of the human mind on getting some formula of order in the world. "The principle of uniformity in nature," said Professor William James, "has to be *sought* under and in spite of the most rebellious appearances; and our conviction of its truth is far more like religious faith than like assent to a demonstration."

Being a thoroughgoing skeptic, therefore, is serious business. The whole mental process by which we build a unified, orderly, and reasonable world is saturated with faith. We believe but cannot positively demonstrate that our minds can tell us the truth, that our knowledge corresponds with reality, that the objective world exists, that the universe is rational, that cause and effect obtain throughout all time and space. All these and other like convictions are basic faiths by which we have intellectually civilized the world.

IV

In the spiritual realm, also, man has an ingrained and despotic impatience of chaos. A world of moral topsy-turvy without unity

and sense in it is as intolerable for his mind as his physical environment would be, left unorganized and whimsical. He cannot stand it. Nature does not abhor a vacuum with more insistence than man abhors a jumbled and senseless moral world. To tell him that his spiritual life is a haphazard accident which straggled into transient existence as a by-product of a process physically caused and determined is to make nonsense out of the highest values that man knows.

Of course, the imperious idea that man's spiritual life on this wandering island in the sky does make sense is a tremendous assumption. Nevertheless, there is no peace for man until he has found satisfying meaning in his spiritual as well as his physical life. What many a young collegian, trying to be a skeptic, does not understand is that religion, however blindly it has sometimes worked, has been on its intellectual side an endeavor to supply this need for a unified spiritual world. The development of monotheism parallels in its motives and desires the development of modern science: both display the same passionate wish to organize the world. Out of the early whim-

sicality of animism where there were as many spirits as there were things; through polytheism with its multitudinous gods from which an oligarchy of great deities gradually emerged; through henotheism where, though there were many gods, a people claimed one god for itself and gave single-hearted devotion to him; to the climactic insight and faith that beneath all diversity, confusion, and contradiction, one purpose binds the whole spiritual process together, one will controls it, one goodness underlies it, man fought his way up to see his spiritual life steadily and whole. Whatever qualifications and enlargements modern thought may work in historic monotheism, a gain was wrought there which humanity cannot give up without incalculable loss. That, too, was the victory of the human spirit wresting unity and order out of chaos.

As one stands back from this whole process by which man's mind has been trying to make this world intellectually habitable, it appears of one piece. There may be no sense in this universe at all. It may be an illusion, or a sorry jest, or a tragic accident. Our minds

may be lying to us, our so-called knowledge may be hallucination, and all the order and significance we think we find may be our own vain imaginings working on a senseless chaos. To think that is real skepticism. To deny that is to turn toward the fundamental faith that this universe and our lives within it have discoverable sense in them.

By faith, therefore, man builds the world in which he lives. Long since he has begun to conquer and civilize the physical universe with his hypotheses and generalizations. But that is not enough. Not until a man sees moral meaning in his experience, believes in God, and so achieves a spiritual as well as a physical universe, has he got his world intellectually in hand where he can find satisfying sense in it and unifying purpose running through it. To be sure, that is faith. But it is not blind faith. It is not "believing what you know isn't so." It is part and parcel of the whole process by which man has achieved real life out of the materials of existence. It is the climax of the race's age-long endeavor to conquer chaos and achieve rationality and order.

V

Everywhere through our colleges, in spite of youthful skepticism, one finds this hunger and thirst for a meaningful spiritual world satisfying to the mind and supporting to the life. No practical preachments alone will meet this need. The students would never dream of saying it so, but they want a theology—an intelligible idea of God in which they can honestly believe. The best of them will be as restless until they find that as scientists would be knowing that there ought to be a doctrine of law-abiding uniformity in physics but as yet unable to state it.

Nor will any half-way station, where they try to content themselves with a God not objectively real but subjectively imagined, be sufficient. Some are trying to satisfy themselves with that. Their God is a sort of celestial Uncle Sam, a divine Santa Claus, not really existent but made up by the pooling of their own ideals. God, they say, is not objectively there; he is our invention, the projection of our better selves on the vast screen of the universe. That idea reminds me of my boyhood when I

used to think that the waving branches of the trees caused the wind. It is a very plausible hypothesis. Whenever the branches wave the wind blows; the wind never does blow except when the branches wave; why not explain the wind by the movement of the trees? Nevertheless, the wind does come first; it springs from sources that trees cannot explain, and all the rustling of their multitudinous leaves is but an answer to it. So I am confident that God comes first, that our spiritual restlessness until we find him is a response to his presence, and I am sure that the faith by which one thus orders and unifies his spiritual world, although it is more difficult of demonstration, is essentially the same kind of faith as that by which the scientist in his realm is conquering chaos.

HOW SHALL WE THINK OF GOD?

I

THE existence of God is a consuming concern of religion, but an astonishing amount of religious propaganda is carried on with apparent carelessness about what people mean by him. A few years ago one of our leading psychologists conducted an investigation into the ways his students thought about God and some of the answers he received were startling. "I think of him as real, actual skin and blood and bones, something we shall see with our eyes some day, no matter what lives we live on earth"; "I have always pictured him according to a description in Paradise Lost as seated upon a throne, while around are angels playing on harps and singing hymns"; "I think of God as having bodily form and being much larger than the average man. He has a radiant countenance beaming with love and compassion. He is erect and upright, fearless and brave." As one considers such images of God in the minds of educated youths, presumably brought

up in our Sunday schools and churches, one must acknowledge that believing in God without considering how one shall picture him is deplorably unsatisfactory. Moreover, this endeavor to have faith in God without knowing what you mean by him is an impossible procedure for increasing numbers of people. They are not atheists nor even agnostics; they have always supposed that they believed in God, but they are facing now a bewildering question: what does the word mean? what is God like? how can he be imagined? Many such inquirers come to a minister's confessional wondering what picture he has in his mind when on Sunday he preaches about 'God.'

The pressure of this difficulty is in part explained by the collapse of the old imaginative frameworks in which our fathers commonly thought of God. What a cozy stage was furnished by the old cosmology, with its flat earth and its close, convenient heaven, on which the religious imagination could picture its gods, their entrances and exits! Centuries will probably pass before religious symbolism fully is transferred to the setting of the new astronomy. The premillennialists, for example, by

hundreds of thousands in the United States, are awaiting the physical return of Jesus from the sky, to set up his kingdom on the earth. To enforce that belief and expectation as an integral part of Christian orthodoxy is one objective of a large section of the fundamentalists. Nothing can exceed the zeal with which they hold that the world will grow continually worse until at last upon the clouds the Lord himself will come to begin his millennial reign.

That expectation depends for its picturableness upon the old astronomy. Granted a flat earth with heaven a little way above, granted Jesus' resurrection conceived in terms of flesh and his ascension conceived as physical levitation through the clouds to the divine dwelling in the sky, granted the picture of him there "at the right hand of God" and, in that case, his return on the clouds by the same route he went is as easily imaginable as the return of a friend from San Francisco. That was the cosmological picture in which the expectation first arose. That is the cosmological picture which sustained it for centuries. The marvel is not that it should have existed from the days of the

first disciples on, but that now, when there is no longer any up or down, or heaven beyond the clouds, men on this whirling planet in the sky should still be preserving in religious imagination what they have discarded everywhere else.

Similarly, our conceptions of God have been shaped by picture-thinking set in the framework of the old world-view. God as a king on high—our fathers, living under monarchy, rejoiced in that image and found it meaningful. His throne, his crown, his scepter, his seraphic retinue, his laws, rewards, and punishments—how dominant that picture was and how persistent is the continuance of it in our hymns and prayers! It was always partly poetry, but it had a prose background: there really had been at first a celestial land above the clouds where God reigned and where his throne was in the heavens.

Even to-day preachers "fall before the throne" when they pray, and ask their congregations to sing, "O worship the King all glorious above." It is noticeable, however, that when they try to be personally helpful and explain to their people the meaning of com-

munion with God, they are likely to leave the imagery of monarchy utterly behind and take up radio. The living voice out of the unseen, the mystery of fellowship with the invisible, the necessity of being rightly tuned, the interferences that break receptivity—men have gained a new and congenial picture in which to image their dealings with God. I suspect that the invention of radio has increased the quantity of praying in America.

II

This obvious fact that religion habitually pictures God in terms of some dominant element in the generation's life, making and worshiping imaginary idols even when visible idols are denied, is, of course, meat and drink to the atheists. Religion, they say, is fancy, poetry, mirage, picture-thinking pathetically mistaken for substantial truth. This scorn of theirs, however, ought to be short-lived. It cannot easily survive *tu quoque*. The man who subscribes to the current mechanistic materialism is in the same boat with the theist, as far as picture-thinking is concerned.

The very latest style in materialistic philosophy is to believe that everything is a physico-chemical mechanism—that the whole universe and every living organism in it from a protozoön to a Plato can be adequately described in mechanistic terms. A few weeks ago a letter came from one of America's leading lawyers, announcing that he felt sure that man was merely a mechanism. That is our latest, up-to-the-minute philosophy, but obviously it is picture-thinking.

The machine is the dominant builder of our civilization. It is the newest and most tremendous power with which our society deals. Anybody acquainted with the history of human thought could have predicted that, just as absolute monarchy, feudalism, humanitarianism, democracy, and all other dominant factors which have captured the imagination of successive generations have had their counterparts in contemporary philosophy, so a machine age would produce a mechanistic theory of life. It has done so. Never was there a clearer illustration of the inevitable urge which causes a generation to picture the cosmos in

terms of a dominant factor in common experience.

Nevertheless, this particular bit of picture-thinking is obviously inadequate to describe even a crab, much less a cosmos. Nobody doubts that there is a profoundly important mechanistic aspect to a crab but, after all, a crab is hardly a machine: he grows from the conceptual egg to maturity, and a machine does not; from inward energies he can reproduce amputated members, and a machine cannot; he can spontaneously adjust himself from within to new situations, and a machine cannot; he propagates his kind through the mystery of generation, and a machine does not. None of the most characteristic functions of a living organism does a machine perform, so that what it means to call even a crab a mechanism is not clear—much less what it means so to describe a man. Can a mechanism remember, think, distinguish between right and wrong, fight for ideals, fall in love, and worship God? All this, however, will not stop our prominent lawyer from calling man a mechanism. There is to-day an almost irresistible craving to crowd all life back into the familiar,

easily visualized picture of a mechanical process. And that will go on for a long while, despite the truth of Professor Thomson's protest from the viewpoint of biology, that "mechanical formulæ do not begin to answer the distinctively biological questions."

This recognition of our inveterate imaginativeness, whether we are religious or not, should be chastening. It ought to set us, somewhat humbled, to considering how we do picture the God whom we either believe in or deny.

III

Of course, the plain truth is that any picture of God which our minds can conceive must be utterly inadequate. We cannot catch the sun at noon in our butterfly nets. This admitted partialness, not to say falseness of all our attempted thoughts about God should disturb no one. "Now we see in a mirror, darkly" is still true. The interesting fact is that, not only can we not imagine God, but science has brought us to the place where we cannot imagine the physical universe. As Einstein, for example,

knows it, it is unpicturable. A four-dimensional, curved cosmos, with time and space commingled so that no one can tell at what point whenness leaves off, and whereness begins—that may be set down in mathematical formulæ but it cannot be pictured. Even a helium atom, going eighteen thousand miles a second through a glass wall without leaving a trace of its transit, may be thought but it cannot be imagined.

A friend of mine, an engineer, while not supposing himself to be one of the half dozen or so folk on earth who understand Einstein, thinks that he does see what Einstein is driving at, and is ambitious to make me see it too. His ingenuity at illustration is amazing. He resorts to extraordinary devices of imagery to help me visualize this physical universe as it really is. I supposed that all this was a friendly concession to my stupidity, but in a recent scientific book I find the same resort to illustration in the endeavor to make relativity clear. The learned writer pictures a man on a moving ship, poised for a stroke at a game of shuffleboard, his seeming rest instantaneous only and relative to the ship's motion, and that,

relative to the movements of winds and currents, and those to the rotation of the earth on its axis and its revolution in its orbit, and these to the whole solar system's speed through space. How like preachers in their methods these scientists have become! How they hanker after illustrations, seek for them high and low, are blissful when they find one! They are facing at last the same problem which we face—they are trying to picture the unpicturable!

IV

What, then, shall the religious man do? He cannot take in earnest the man-sized representations of God on which, it may be, he was brought up—a god walking in a garden in the cool of the day, making woman from man's rib, confounding men's speech lest they build a tower too high, decreeing a flood to drown humanity, trying to slay a man at a wayside inn because his child was not circumcised, showing his back but not his face to a man upon a mountain-top, or ordering the massacre of his chosen people's enemies, men, women, and

children, without mercy. He is in revolt against all that as Euripides, over four centuries before Christ, rebelled against the gods of Olympus:

> Say not there be adulterers in Heaven
> Nor prisoner gods and gaoler. Long ago
> My heart has known it false and will not alter.
> God, if he be God, lacketh naught. All these
> Are dead unhappy tales of minstrelsy.

Nevertheless, the religious man must have imaginations of God, if God is to be real to him. Watch the European peasant at his wayside shrine before the image of the Madonna, or the Moslem, with his theoretical monotheism, worshiping nevertheless at the tomb of his local saint, or the Buddhist, with his impersonal deity, bowing still before the placid image of Amida, or the Protestant, refusing outward images but making verbal ones by the hundred, and the impression is irresistible: the vividness and availability of man's religion depend largely on his imaginations of God.

Moreover, if religion is to be vital—fellowship with God sustaining life, and responsibility to God quickening conscience—these

imaginations must picture our dealing with the Divine in terms of personal relationship. God must have in him, in ways however far beyond our capacity to think, qualities akin to those which in ourselves we meet as intelligence, purposefulness, good-will. This is the gist of the whole matter in the religious problem of thinking about God. We may start, if we will, with this vast unpicturable universe, and try to imagine God adequate to its size and its complexity, its order and beauty, its terror and prodigality. Creative Reality, conceived in spiritual rather than physical terms—that undoubtedly is God. But that cold, bare statement will not satisfy the religious man's imagination or his life. The real question is: can God be thought of in terms of personal relationship, so that we can commune with him, be inspired by him, depend on him, be responsible to him, and, like our fathers before us, love him so deeply that we will love nothing else too much, and fear him so reverently that we will fear nothing else at all?

Now, all philosophies divide on this one issue: whether the subhuman world of physics and chemistry or the human world, with its

spiritual values and possibilities, shall supply the dominant pictures of what reality is like. Some philosophies split the world in two, the subhuman world on one side, the human on the other, and, treating the latter as a mere echo of the former, they get their controlling ideas from the physical world alone. That is the source of all materialism. It starts by forgetting man in the higher ranges of his life, treating man as though he were not a substantial part of the universe to be explained, thinking of man and his spiritual values as an accidental appendage to creation, and then basing its theories on an analysis of the subhuman remainder. It chops the real universe into two portions and takes all its dominant ideas from the lower half.

But all idealistic philosophies and all high religion refuse that false division and that insane choice, and are sure that, wherever else Creative Reality may have displayed his quality and revealed his meaning, he has done so in the spiritual life of man. Whatever else may be true of man, he certainly is part and parcel of this universe, bone of its bone, flesh of its flesh, the climactic expression of its life,

and the universe cannot be interpreted apart from him. In the Yerkes Observatory I watched, one night, an astronomer studying the nebula of Lyra. In one unillumined spot of it, which through the telescope seemed negligible, thousands of our solar systems could be lost. Yet which was more marvelous, the nebula of Lyra or the astronomer? The nebula is only gaseous matter, but the man who was apprehending it, measuring it, computing its distance, analyzing its substance, and stating its laws, the man who with his thought was conquering Lyra, besetting it behind and before and laying his hand upon it, was far more marvelous than the thing that was merely being apprehended. Any philosophy which, in trying to explain creation, takes in the constellations but leaves out the mind which grasps them cannot be true.

In man at his best, then, Reality receives its clearest revelation—that is the faith of all high religion. The place where man vitally finds God, deals with God, discovers the qualities of God, and learns to think religiously about God is not primarily among the stars but within his own experience of goodness,

truth, and beauty, and the truest images of God are therefore to be found in man's spiritual life. Partial they are, inadequate, not "without omission, disproportion, or aberration," as Martineau phrased it; but still the old figures—fatherhood, friendship, love, justice—by which the seers and saints have tried to make the Eternal real to their imaginations, are the true clue to the understanding of him. That was Plato's meaning when he said, "God is never in any way unrighteous; he is perfect righteousness. And there is nothing more like him than one of us who is himself most righteous." That was Jesus' meaning when he said, "When ye pray, say, Father." That has been the experience of countless folk who for themselves have discovered Tolstoy's truth: "Where love is, God is." And that has been the historic church's meaning when it has exalted the incarnation as the center of its doctrine—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Indeed, I would go farther. Protestantism has been too bare of symbolism, too afraid of warmth and color, too reluctant to serve the spiritual life by the beautiful uses of the imagi-

nation. The shrines and images, the crucifixes and pictures before which some other Christians worship have seemed to Protestants idolatrous. But to many a supposed idolater they mean something else altogether—aids to the imagination, as a trinket or a photograph, perhaps a very poor one, may help to recreate the image of a friend and vivify the consciousness of his felt presence. By tradition and temperament I am a thoroughgoing Protestant, but I wish that in our services we knew better how to quicken the imagination of our people and make the divine Presence mystically real. Perhaps, some day, like the scientist using his shuffleboard game to illustrate the universe, we shall employ more generously the aid of symbolism, knowing alike how true it all is and yet how far from true of him whose judgments are unsearchable and whose ways past tracing out.

CONCERNING PRAYER

I

PERSONAL religion is drawn like an ellipse around two foci: communion with God and service to man. The second involves problems varied and difficult, from casual individual relationships to the League of Nations, but, after all, the underlying principle of human service is easy to see. Communion with God, however, alike in principle and practice, is for many a perplexing matter, and even among professing Christians prayer is often a confused problem or a formal observance rather than a sustaining help.

The effect of this upon vital religion must be serious, for prayer, when it is real, is the innermost way in which any one who believes in God makes earnest business of his faith. It is possible to believe in God as the man upon the street believes in the Rings of Saturn. His confidence in their existence, while he supposes it to be well-founded, is second-hand and the evidence, were he to state it, would be confused

and unconvincing and, anyway, he does not propose to do anything about them or because of them. That multitudes believe in God with similar inconsequence is clear. On the whole they agree with Napoleon that somebody must have made the constellations. They may have poetic hours congenial to faith in God when like Walt Whitman they walk out into the mystical, moist, night air and from time to time look up in perfect silence at the stars. Perhaps they take occasional excursions into philosophy and return vaguely convinced that for some reason or other mechanistic naturalism will not work, that it is too simple to explain this vast, evolving universe, and that God, or something like him, must be at the heart of creation. Or perhaps they are natural traditionalists and stick to faith in God against all comers because they were taught it by their fathers before them.

There are many ways in which an inoperative faith in God, without effective influence on the one who holds it, may thus exist in multitudes of minds and give the impression of wide-spread religion. But that is not religion. Religion has not arrived until faith in God has

been translated into action, and the most intimate and inward action which emerges when faith in God is real is prayer. That is the soul getting into contact with the God in whom it believes. That is man's spirit making earnest with its confidence that it comes from Spirit and can hold communion with him. As Professor William James put it, a man dealing with his own inward life at its best "becomes conscious that this higher part is coterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck." A man who has no more faith than a grain of mustard seed but who makes that use of it is much more essentially religious than a prayerless philosopher who can argue the whole case for theism from Dan to Beersheba.

II

There are many obstacles which commonly inhibit this adventure of the soul in praying,

most of which are not philosophical but intimately personal. People, for example, do not commonly begin to pray (however much they say prayers) until they rather desperately need to. An English friend who was in the thick of the bad business on the Flanders front tells me that one night behind the lines he had to listen to an astronomer sent out by the British War Office to tell the men about the stars, their constellations, and relative positions, so that soldiers lost at night might guide themselves by the heavens. My friend was frankly bored. Astronomy seemed to him an alien and abstruse affair with no bearing on the mud and death with which they were concerned. One night, however, reconnoitering in No Man's Land, his men were discovered by the enemy, were fired upon, became confused, ran at random, lay down, and then tried to creep home. But where was home? Then my friend remembered the stars. He desperately needed them. In dismay he saw by means of them that his men had been creeping toward the enemy. The stars, he says, were very real to him that night when he got his last man safely back.

Reality in praying is commonly subject to the same condition of urgent need. Communion with God, which through many years has seemed a pious superfluity, may suddenly become a real necessity. A man discovers what all wise men sometime must discover, that life is not simply effort, output, attack, the aggressive impact of oneself upon the world. He finds that strong living is impossible without inward resources to fall back upon. Like a closely beleaguered city of the olden time, he is undone unless he can discover a fountain of living water somewhere within him. Then he may light upon the secret of prayer. The transformation wrought in those who do is often marvelous. They do more than believe in God. They actually achieve contact with the MORE, in a real fashion get on board of it and save themselves.

III

There are some who are fortunate enough to reach this experience before desperate crisis drives them to it. They recognize before they are whipped into seeing it that the destinies of

personality lie in the world within rather than in the world without. That, after all, is the insight essential to real praying, and because this generation in the Western world largely lacks it and is obsessed with the external universe and what can be done with that, prayer has become unreal to multitudes.

For prayer is a poor reliance if one is mainly intent on managing the external world. That is not the realm where praying operates. Prayer will not alter the weather nor harness the latent powers of the universe to drive our cars and light our houses; and as long as the major interest of men is centered in an area where prayer is not effective, it is bound to be neglected and to seem unreal.

This practical obsession of our time in mastering the external forces to do our bidding—as though wealth and worth in human living were attainable by that chiefly or alone—is responsible for more than the decline of prayer. All spiritual values suffer. The American who remarked that Chicago had not yet had time for culture but that when she did get around to it she would make it hum, was characteristically modern. Yet, after all, culture

cannot be made to hum. It rises out of deep fountains in the soul of a generation. It is begotten of the Spirit in the hearts and minds of those who love loveliness; and art, music, literature, drama, education, as well as religion, will lag, falter, give ugliness instead of beauty, until we learn once more the ancient lesson that the world without is but the setting for the world within, where humanity's real fortunes lie.

We are fooled by obviousness and size. The world without has visibility, dimension, measurement. The world within is unseen, impalpable. That deceives us. We think the big is marvelous. Athens was less than half the size of Buffalo, but Athens at her best did care about the world within. Seers like Plato taught the people that one real world alone exists, the inner world of ideas and ideals, of which the outer world is but the shadow; and Athens left to history a spiritual heritage unexhausted yet.

Palestine is smaller than Vermont, but at her best Palestine cared about the inner world, from psalmists who sang, "All that is within me, bless his holy name," to him who said, "The

kingdom of God is within you," and we still are spiritual pensioners upon that little place we call the Holy Land. In the long run this is the kind of greatness that mankind cares most to remember. We crucially need a revival of it in our generation. And when that comes, prayer will come back again. For prayer in its true meaning is one of the great indispensables of a rich and fruitful inner life.

IV

While it is true, however, that the inhibitions which keep people from effective praying are more likely to be personal and practical than philosophical, the intellectual difficulties are real. Most children with a devout religious background are taught to pray to a very human God. Their imaginations of him are naïve and picturesque. "Has God a skin?" I was asked by a six-year-old. When in surprise I denied the gross suggestion, she broke into laughter and her explanation of her merriment was ready on demand, "to think how funny God must look without one!" Almost all children who think of God at all begin with

some such naïve anthropomorphism. Even in our adult hymns and prayers the old imagery of a flat earth with an encircling heaven still is kept for poetic purposes and God is addressed as though he were a few miles above us in the sky. This picturesque trellis for the religious imagination to train itself upon easily becomes part of the child's working idea of life. God is thought of as an individual, picturable in some form or other, whose major dwelling is the sky. Sometimes the pictures are very crude; sometimes the imagination soars, as with one lad of five who on his first sight of the starlit sky saw the figure of Deity clearly outlined in the constellations.

To a God so concretely conceived the child begins to pray. He asks for anything he wants. He tries experiments in achieving his purposes by request and checks up his apparent successes and his failures. On into adolescence, with varying degrees of earnestness, this habit of praying often goes, accompanied by an idea of God which, gradually sublimated and exalted, loses its grosser features, but which still retains its picture of Deity, off somewhere, who mysteriously hears us when we cry.

Then comes the crash. The youth is introduced into a vivid understanding of our new universe with its unimaginable distances and its reign of law. The habitation above us where the gods once dwelt is demolished utterly; we look clean through it into abysmal space. On the bewildered imagination, robbed of its old frameworks and supports, the truth dawns that the anthropomorphic God long believed and prayed to never made Betelgeuse and Antares, that this universe is too vast to have been created in the first place or sustained now by the Deity of childhood's imagination. The youth's prayers begin to ring hollow. He has lost his old imagination of the God to whom he prays. He finds himself talking into vacancy. For him there is no longer any God there, or a God grown so vague and misty that prayer directed to him is a travesty upon the word.

For many people this is the end of praying save in some crisis when they pray instinctively as they might do any irrational and hectic thing. Others, however, having found real value in the habit, refuse to surrender so easily a cherished help. They shift their basis. They

leave God largely out of the matter and interpret praying as self-communion. They retreat into their own souls and exercise themselves in meditation and aspiration. They encourage the ascendency of their own spiritual life by maintaining seasons of quiet and receptivity when they are hospitably open-doored to the highest that they know. They do find help. But often, when the need is urgent and the crisis sharp, they are oppressed by the isolation in which their self-communion is carried on. Their performance becomes attempted self-hypnotism. They are not tapping hidden resources of Spirit; they are going through spiritual gymnastic exercises to increase their own muscle. They miss the Great Companion of their early prayers. At least they wish that they could obey the injunction of Epictetus the Stoic: "When you have shut the doors and made a darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone; for you are not alone, but God is within."

Between the two false ideas of prayer—clamorous petition to an anthropomorphic God and the inward endeavor to lift oneself by one's own boot-straps—multitudes are to-day

uncertain and dissatisfied. Yet the way out is not difficult. Prayer is not crying to a mysterious individual off somewhere; prayer is not bouncing the ball of one's own aspiration against the wall of one's own soul and catching it again; true prayer is fulfilling one of the major laws of the spiritual world and getting the appropriate consequences.

Just as around our bodies is the physical universe, in dependence upon which we live so that we create no power of our own, but assimilate it—eat it, drink it, absorb it—so around our spirits and in them is the Spiritual Universe. It is really there and it is as law-abiding as the physical cosmos with which the scientist deals. True prayer is fulfilling the conditions of our relationship with this Spiritual World. We cannot create inward power any more than we create our physical strength. We assimilate it. We fulfil the laws of its reception and it comes. So Spirit, which is God, surrounds our lives, impinges on them, is the condition of their existence, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." To see the truth of this is to believe in God; to pray is to make earnest with it and avail ourselves of the resources of

strength waiting for those who fulfil the conditions and get the results.

Such an approach to prayer, as the fulfilling of spiritual law in one's relationship with God, is bringing back the intelligent and fruitful practice of it to many who thought that they had lost it altogether. Such an approach saves us from the pious blasphemy of telling God what we think he should do, or reminding him of gifts to be bestowed which he unhappily would otherwise forget. Such an approach saves us from the futile and dangerous extension of prayer to realms where it does not belong, as though praying, which is a law of the inner world of personal life and is demonstrably effective there, could be relied on to accomplish results beyond its own realm. Such an approach saves us also from the loneliness of mere self-communion, for prayer is no more that than eating and drinking are; like them, praying is receptive fellowship with a real world by which we are surrounded and of which we are a part.

Nor does this view rob God of personal meaning, as though he were blind energy alone.

To be sure, God cannot be an individual to whom we cry. The clinging garments of anthropomorphism will long clothe our poetic language about God and, like the words 'sunrise' and 'sunset,' carry over into a new day the imagery of an outgrown world-view. But there is no safety for religious faith among the intelligent until it is plainly recognized that the old astronomy has really gone and with it the old god of a local habitation, conceived in picturesque and individual terms. What we are manifestly dealing with is a vital universe surcharged with Creative Power. Unless we surrender to mechanistic naturalism, we cannot think of that Power in physical terms alone. That Power has issued in spiritual life and in terms of spiritual life must be interpreted. There is more than a *push* in this orderly and evolving universe, as though it were being heaved up from below by blind forces; there is a *pull* also, as though ends were in view and goals being achieved. That far philosophy can go; religion goes farther. It commits itself to this Power in terms of friendship and good-will. It approaches the thought

of him by way of the best we know. It says with Lowell:

> God is in all that liberates and lifts,
> In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles.

It finds God, not primarily without, but within, rising inwardly, as Jesus described it, like a living fountain. It trusts the Spirit by whom our spirits are inspired, and enters into conscious fellowship with him. That is prayer. At its best it dispenses with words and postures and becomes silent companionship with the Unseen. At its finest it ceases clamorous petition and becomes affirmation—the soul inwardly appropriating its heritage of fellowship with the Highest and growing rich thereby.

Such prayer is not contrary to law; it is the fulfilling of law. Those who faithfully meet such inward conditions of spiritual life find poise, perspective, power, achieve personalities balanced and unified, build characters magnanimous toward others and within themselves conscious of deep resources and reserves. Even Tyndall, the scientist, who notoriously denied what most Christians of his time

thought about prayer, said, "It is not my habit of mind to think otherwise than solemnly of the feeling which prompts prayer. . . . Often unreasonable, if not contemptible, in its purer forms prayer hints at disciplines which few of us can neglect without moral loss."

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

I

THE uproar about the teaching of evolution has brought back once more to the center of the stage the old controversy between science and religion. As one reads the many articles upon the subject one gets the uncomfortable impression that, while the extreme fundamentalists are unmistakably definite in their views about an inerrant Bible and the wickedness of evolution, and while the scientists are clear-cut in their attitude about the truth of evolution and the necessity of freedom in teaching it, the position of religious liberals is not being clearly put.

Some vaguely progressive minds take too much comfort in such consoling generalities as that true science and true religion cannot conflict. The proposition is so harmless that no one is tempted to gainsay it but, so far from solving any problems, it serves only to becloud the issue. The plain fact is that, however true science and true religion ought to behave to-

ward each other, actual science and actual religion are having another disagreeable monkey-and-parrot time.

That this ought not to happen, that, ideally, science and religion move in different realms and should peacefully pursue each its separate task in the interpretation of man's experience, is easy to say, and it is true. Life, like the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, if it is to be fully understood, needs for one thing the grammarian. He will analyze it into its parts of speech, note the differences between nouns and pronouns, verbs, adjectives, articles, and adverbs, and will formulate the laws by which they are put together to make a complex unity. That is an indispensable piece of business in the understanding of the chapter and it represents the scientist's work on the world at large. But if the chapter is to be fully known, a more comprehensive method of interpretation must be exercised upon it than the grammarian alone can be responsible for. Its meaning as a whole must be apprehended, its lessons understood, its spiritual value appropriated, its author studied through the medium of his expression. That attitude applied to life is religion. Reli-

gion is the appreciation of life's spiritual values and the interpretation of life, its origin, its purpose, and its destiny, in terms of them. The grammatical analysis and the spiritual appreciation ought not to quarrel. The appreciator ought to thank God for the grammarian whenever he thinks of him.

But, for some reason or other, making the lion and the lamb lie down in peace together has proved no more ideal a dream than getting science and religion to quit their controversy and become partners in the interpretation of life. What is the reason?

II

In so far as religion is responsible, there are at least two explanations of this recurrent contention. One is the association of religion with an inerrant book. Every one who knows anything about the historical origins of the Bible knows how little it is an artificial product, the result of supernatural dictation, handed down from heaven, as has been taught of the Koran, or miraculously hidden and discovered, like the golden plates of Mormon. Modern scholar-

ship has traced the progressive writing and assembling of our Scriptures with a massing of evidence which puts the general outline of the process beyond reasonable doubt. From the earliest documents, such as the war-songs of Deborah, up through the long story of growing laws, changing circumstances and customs, enlarged horizons of moral obligation, worthier thoughts of God, through the prophets, and the Master's ministry to the early Christian church—stage by stage the writing and assembling of the documents which now comprise our Bible can be traced. How much of the Bible was in existence in the eighth century B. C. we know, and what each new century with its changing thoughts and insights contributed we can see.

It is obvious that this amazing literature came warmly up out of human experience. That is its glory and its strength. Touch it anywhere and you can feel the pulse of men and women in their joys and sorrows, struggles, aspirations, faiths, despairs. The whole book is "blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity." These were real folk whose spiritual life welled up in psalm and prophecy and

whose life stories are told in the most rewarding narratives that literature has preserved. Here also was recorded a development of thought about God, about duty, about the significance of human life, far and away the most valuable that history records. Of course, a Christian who deeply believes in God does not think it was an accident. Of course, he sees in it a revelation, an unveiling of the truth by which man's life is elevated, purified, redeemed. Of course he thinks it was inspired.

But whatever else inspiration may mean, it certainly does not mean that men in writing a sacred book are lifted out of their own day and provided with the mental thought-forms, scientific explanations, and world-views of a generation thousands of years unborn. It is that utterly fallacious and futile idea of inspiration which causes the trouble. One wonders why anybody should wish to believe it. What good does it do? What addition does it make to the inherent spiritual value of the book? Would the Twenty-third Psalm be more beautiful if the writer had had a Ph.D. from Harvard, or is the fourth chapter of Ephesians dependent for its worth upon the

supposition that the writer held the Copernican astronomy?

There is no peace for religion in its relationship with science until we recognize that, of course, the Bible is not an inerrant book. As far as the physical universe is concerned, all the writers of the Bible supposed that they were living on a flat earth covered by the solid firmament of the sky, with heaven above and Sheol beneath, and fiery bodies moving across the face of the sky to illumine man. The Great Isaiah did not have to look through Galileo's telescope to write his fortieth chapter, nor would Micah's summary of the law, to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God, have been any finer if he had been able to explain Einstein on relativity.

When, therefore, the Bible is set up in opposition to evolution, the whole issue is ludicrously false. The Bible knows nothing about evolution, just as it knows nothing about automobiles and radio. It knows no more about Darwin and his mutation of species than it does about Copernicus and his revolution of the earth. The Bible antedates all that. The first chapter of Genesis simply took the old

Semitic story of creation, purified it of mythology, made it monotheistic, and set it in majestic language. It is the noblest narrative of creation in any ancient literature. But it has no possible connection with evolution, for or against. It is a picturesque presentation of creation in six literal days, each with an evening and a morning. It is not proscientific; it is not antiscientific; for the simple reason that it is not scientific at all. And the absurd attempt to make Genesis mean evolution by stretching the days into eons never was dreamed of during the long centuries of the Bible's existence until it was ingeniously suggested by some scribal mind, as a desperate device to insinuate geologic ages into Holy Writ.

No armistice can possibly be declared in the recurrent war between science and religion unless this elemental fact about the Bible is clear. To suppose that we must think about scientific problems in the way the Biblical writers did is incredible. Nobody does it. The most rock-ribbed fundamentalist never remotely approaches doing it. Voliva of Zion

City comes the nearest to it. He believes that the earth is flat.

The Bible is the supreme Book of spiritual life. There we touch a valid revelation of the character and the will of God. It is a fountain that never runs dry, and the better it is known the better for personal character and social progress. But to use it as a scientific text-book is perilous nonsense which does far more harm to religion than to anything else. That is indeed hoisting religion with its own petard.

III

Religion's responsibility for the contest with science can be traced to another source. Religion may almost be said to consist in a sense of sacredness; it makes man feel that some things in his life are holy, inviolable; it reveres them, loves them, even worships before them as the symbols and evidences of God. This attitude of religion, throwing a glamour of sanctity over everything with which it is closely associated—shrines, rituals, holy persons and places, ideas and ideals—belongs to its very

genius. No one would want a religion that did not do that. The cleansing of religion from superstition does not eliminate this powerful influence which inheres in the sense of sacredness; it simply detaches the feeling of sanctity from unworthy and magical objects and reorients it around moral ideals, transforms it into reverence for personality and devotion to duty seen as the will of God.

This consciousness that something in life is sacred, worth living and dying for, is one of humanity's moral indispensables, and religion is the fruitful mother of it. But it is very dangerous. It is one of the things which we cannot get on without but which it is perilous to get on with. I was talking recently with a student of sociology about the strange contrast between the eager welcome given to new scientific inventions and the apathy, dislike, or active opposition that greets new suggestions in the social and spiritual realms. The automobile, the aeroplane, the radio—how instantly and avidly they are received and utilized! But to alter the ritual observances of a church, to introduce eugenic practices, to get a reformation of theology, or to organize

a League of Nations to replace belligerent nationalism—what an uproar of outraged sentiment always accompanies suggested change in such realms!

The reasons for this strange inconsistency are doubtless many, but the sense of sacredness clearly plays an important part. That holds up progress indefinitely in any place where it can get a foothold. Nobody counts a bicycle sacred if he wants an automobile, or regards rowing a boat as holy if he is able to buy a motor. The sense of sanctity does not operate in such realms. We change from candles to kerosene lamps, to gas, to electricity with no struggle against the rebellious sentiment of sacredness. But in the realms of human relationships in general and of religion in particular the feeling of sanctity is one of the most powerful, restraining influences in our lives. Patriotism conceived in terms of *my country against yours* gains sanctity, and when men wish to change it to *my country with yours for the peace of the world,* aroused patriots resent the new idea as though a shrine were being desecrated. Even such unlikely things as the rules of the United States Senate can become

sacred until any alteration seems sacrilege. As for religion, this truth easily explains most of its ultraconservatism. How typical of all religion it is that, long after the stone age was passed and bronze knives had come in for household purposes, the old flint knife still was used to slay sacrificial beasts! Religion had cast over the ancient implement the glamour of sanctity and it could not be changed.

The application of this to the problem in hand is clear. Whatever else religion may clothe with feelings of reverence, it is sure to do so with those forms of thought, those mental vehicles, in which it has carried the precious freight of its spiritual experience. Listen to good old Father Inchofer in 1631 as he pours out of a pious heart his outraged sense of sacrilege at the idea that the earth moves: "The opinion of the earth's motion is of all heresies the most abominable, the most pernicious, the most scandalous; the immovability of the earth is thrice sacred; argument against the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, and the incarnation, should be tolerated sooner than an argument to prove that the earth moves." Why this rage? Why

should a gentle servant of his fellows thus boil with indignant grief at a new astronomy? The reason is precisely the same that makes the fundamentalist to-day forget the Sermon on the Mount and ransack the dictionary for something bad enough to say about the evolutionists. Father Inchofer, I suppose, had had a deep and beautiful spiritual experience. He had lived in fellowship with God and love for men. He had always visualized that relationship in terms of a stationary earth with the concentric heavens encircling it. On that mental trellis the flowers of his spirit had bloomed. It was very sacred to him. He revered it as part and parcel of his faith. We ought to sympathize with him. No wonder the idea of a moving earth seemed to him, not an advance of science, but an abyss of blasphemy.

Nevertheless, Father Inchofer was wrong and Father Inchofer's successors to-day are wrong for the same reason. They have let their sense of sacredness run away with them. Their feeling of sanctity has unintelligently attached itself to all sorts of things that are not integral parts of vital religion. A station

ary earth is not sacred; a whimsical universe where miracles, not law, are the order of the day is not sacred; creation by fiat is not sacred. Religion has no inherent dependence on such outgrown ideas. Yet all these things, along with many others from the use of anesthetics in operations to acceptance of the law of gravitation, have been bitterly opposed in the name of religion as though the old science to which the religious imagination had clung, around which it had entwined itself, were a holy thing. There is no peace in sight between science and religion until religion recognizes that the sense of sanctity is too valuable an article to be misused in holding up scientific progress. Once many Christians were scandalized at geology just as now they are scandalized at evolution; they called it "a dark art," "dangerous and disreputable," "a forbidden province," "an awful invasion of the testimony of Revelation." How long will religious people go on making this lamentable blunder which always reacts disastrously upon the fortunes of religion itself and in the end can do nothing against the new truth?

Always the outcome has been the same: the

scientific view of the world has triumphed and the seers of the spirit have found the new truth a nobler vehicle than the old for the experiences of the soul. Religion is not dependent on this scientific formulation or that. Religion moves in the realm of spiritual values where the soul does justly, loves kindness, and walks humbly with its God. Through all the centuries, under every conceivable scientific view of the world, men have found their peace and power in that; and if to-morrow our modern view should be upset and Darwin be out-Darwined by some new discoverer, our children's children at their best would find, flowing in their new channels, the water of eternal life, whereof, if a man drink, he does not thirst again.

IV

One does not mean that blame for the repeated contests between science and religion rests exclusively upon religion. Scientists are human; they are quite capable of making fools of themselves. Especially they display an inveterate weakness before one besetting temptation. They get a working hypothesis in

some special science; they rejoice in its effectiveness; they organize by means of it the data in their particular realm; and then, infatuated by their success, they proceed to postulate the hypothesis as a complete explanation of the universe and an adequate philosophy of life. Again and again that has been done. One specialist in the effect of sunlight on life was even guilty of the ludicrous dictum: "Heliotropism doubtless wrote Hamlet." To-day some of our behaviorists in psychology are doing the same thing. One might have expected it. This overweening confidence in the adequacy of a working hypothesis in a special science to explain everything naturally emerges in the early days of the science when the new idea has just burst in all its glory on the thought of its discoverers. Behaviorism is a very valuable working method of investigation in psychology, but behaviorism is not an adequate account of personality, as some of its devotees consider it; much less does it furnish a comprehensive philosophy of life.

Religion, therefore, does have reason to be deeply concerned about some tendencies in modern science. There is a real conflict be-

tween those whom science has led to a materialistic philosophy and those who interpret life in terms of its spiritual values. But this is not a conflict between science and religion; this is a conflict between most scientists and all religionists on one side and a few scientists upon the other.

As for the issues now popularly upsetting the equilibrium of the churches in America, let fundamentalism look to itself. It is not fighting evolution with facts, which alone can be effective instruments in such a war. No one who knows the facts is against evolution. It is fighting evolution with authoritative dicta from an inerrant Book and with a horrified sense of outraged sanctity about the disturbance of an outgrown way of thinking. That sort of procedure never yet did anything but harm to religion. Meanwhile, increasing multitudes of devout Christians rejoice in the larger thought of God and the stronger faith in him which evolution has brought.

EVOLUTION AND RELIGION

I

Toward the close of my freshman year in college I woke up to the fact that I believed in evolution. After the manner of young collegians, I was greatly impressed with myself on this account and prepared a letter which should drop the bomb of my momentous disclosure into the peaceful circle of my family. With interest and some anxiety I awaited the reverberation. What I actually received from my father was as follows: "Dear Harry: I believed in evolution before you were born."

To any one brought up in a Christian home where a generation ago evolution was neither a stranger nor an enemy, it is almost incredible that to-day so great an uproar should be aroused over the conflict between evolution and religion. When my father began believing in the new hypothesis there were still respectable scientific authorities that could be quoted against it. In this country Louis Agassiz was a name to conjure with and the

weight of his very considerable opinion was against evolution. But now the last serious scientific opposition to evolution has disappeared. The hypothesis that separate species came into existence by descent, branching off from older and simpler forms so that all life, like a tree, goes back to some unicellular beginning, is as much taken for granted among scientists as is the new astronomy or the law-abiding nature of the universe. Speaking of evolution, Professor J. Arthur Thomson says: "It is the only known scientific way of answering the question: How has the present-day system of Animate Nature come into being?"

The fact that evolution is taken for granted in all serious scientific circles is often obscured by the confusion of evolution with Darwinism. The two terms rightly used do not mean the same thing. Evolution had been suggested long before Darwin. Just as centuries before Copernicus and Galileo, Greek seers had guessed that the sun, moon and stars did not encircle the earth but that the earth wheeled about a central fire, so in Aristotle, Lucretius, Augustine and other ancients are foregleams of the evolutionary explanation of living

forms. With Lamarck's conviction in 1801, based upon the work of great predecessors, that "all species, not excepting man, were descended from other species," a definite doctrine of evolution at last emerged. It converted Charles Darwin's grandfather, and on the explanation of it many minds were at work when, in 1859, The Origin of Species appeared with its brilliant contribution.

Darwinism, therefore, is not synonymous with evolution. Darwinism is a particular theory of the factors that have been at work in the process of evolution. Darwin tried to explain how evolution came to pass, and his explanation can be tersely put in three brief propositions: First, he noted that however much offspring may resemble their parent forms, they always vary in detail and that some of these variations mean advantage and others mean handicap. Second, he noted that more offspring are produced than can survive without overpopulating the earth, so that in the struggle for life the forms with advantageous variations tend to win and the rest to perish or stagnate. Third, he noted that, provided novel peculiarities can be inherited, those varia-

tions which help survival will tend to perpetuate themselves in descendants differing from their ancestral forms. This, in briefest outline, is Darwinism.

Now, Darwinism as an adequate description of evolution is not believed in by all competent biologists. Darwin himself proposed his description tentatively, and like a true scientist hoped for corrections and additions. They both have come. Some biologists to-day are orthodox Darwinians; others are outright anti-Darwinians; most are on middle ground; but, whatever their attitude toward Darwinism, all biologists are evolutionists.

This distinction between the major proposition on the one hand that our varied species of vegetable and animal life have come into existence by gradual descent and not by separate creation, and on the other hand particular explanations as to how this happened and what factors were dominant in the process, is necessary to any intelligent dealing with the problem.

Darwinism could be utterly given up without affecting the standing of evolution. Indeed, it is fair to say that at this present time

there never was such unanimous agreement among competent judges as to the truth of evolution, and never such diversity of scientific opinion as to its explanation.

II

This paper does not concern Darwinism, which is a highly technical subject. It concerns evolution, and the first step in understanding that is to face the problem which evolutionists are trying to solve. Some people seem to suppose that evolutionists are such out of sheer perversity. They have been described by one excited clergyman as "under the frenzied inspiration of the inhaler of mephitic gas"; their opinions have been pictured as "a jungle of fanciful assumption"; and as for motives, one defender of the faith has assailed them as "that infidel clique whose well-known object is to do away with all idea of a God."

As a matter of fact, evolutionists have been endeavoring through long and patient study to understand some obvious phenomena which face us on every side and which clearly need an explanation. Where did all these manifold

species of plants and animals come from? What are the causal factors in their infinite diversity? There are two hundred thousand named species of insects, one hundred thousand named species of dicotyledonous flowering plants, twenty-five thousand named species of vertebrates and ten times as many invertebrates. How did these diverse species originate?

It is easy to see that only two answers are possible. One is the theory of the special creationist. Perhaps each one of these species was separately produced. Perhaps the Creator originally made two hundred and fifty thousand species of invertebrates. That idea was unconsciously involved in the view of our forefathers. Every kind of living creature now on earth was represented in the original creation, so they thought, by parents exactly like them, from whom in a succession of unchanging forms offspring had descended until now. But if they held this view, easily picturing Adam as giving names to all the animals and Noah as welcoming two each of all the species into the Ark, it surely was before they knew there were two hundred thousand species of insects and

two hundred and fifty thousand species of invertebrates.

On the island of St. Helena there are one hundred and twenty-nine species of beetles. Of these, one hundred and twenty-eight, peculiar to St. Helena, are found nowhere else. Can the believer in special creation be right? Did God originally make one hundred and twenty-eight species of beetles particularly designed to live on St. Helena alone?

If, however, this hypothesis of special creation is given up, one straightway becomes an evolutionist. He may try to protect himself from going the whole way, he may endeavor to draw a circle around man and keep the idea of special creation for him alone, but either he must be a special creationist or else in some degree he must be an evolutionist. For if separate creation of each species is not true, then it is true that diverse species come into existence by variation in descent from earlier parent forms. And if, on the basis of the evidence, one finds it impossible to draw artificial lines shutting out protected areas from the operation of so universal a process, then the story of existence on this planet starts with

some simple protoplasmic substance and records a great adventure of developing life, swimming in the sea, crawling on the land, flying in the air, standing upright, growing nervous systems, and blossoming out at last into mental and spiritual life.

III

If scientists to-day are universally agreed in accepting such a picture of evolution, it is because all the evidence they can get their hands on points that way. A leading opponent of evolution, who has been trying to secure legislative enactments forbidding the teaching of it in schools and colleges, says that evolution is a guess. A more serious misstatement of plain facts it would be difficult to imagine. Whatever else the evolutionists have been doing, they have been laboriously trying not to guess, but to collect all facts in every realm where pertinent facts could possibly be found, and on the basis of them to discern the truth. Especially they have wanted facts that would discredit evolution. The reputation of a scientist would be secure forever if now he could over-

throw evolution and substitute a new hypothesis. He would rise to the rank of Copernicus and Galileo; he would become a super-Darwin. Darwin himself was voracious of facts that might throw doubt on evolution. In the short autobiography he wrote for his children, we read: "I had, also, during many years, followed a golden rule, namely, whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once: for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from the memory than favourable ones." Surely, that kind of long-sustained and patient investigation is not guessing.

Consider briefly the various realms that have been ransacked for facts in which all the known evidence bears testimony for and not against the hypothesis of evolution.

Paleontology is the study of the remains of extinct life. We are used to thinking of fossils as the relics of old vegetable and animal forms that exist no more, but so to think is a modern achievement. The ancients supposed fossils

were the remains of sea animals who died when the flood was on and whose descendants still exist in the depths of the sea, or they said that the fossils were models which the Almighty used, like a sculptor, when he made living creatures at the first, or they said that God deliberately put fossils in the crust of the earth to try the faith of his children. Now, however, the geological strata in their chronological arrangement are well known, and through the fossilated remains we can confidently trace the gradual ascent of life from simple to more complicated forms. The evolutionary development of horse, camel, elephant, crocodile, and cuttlefish is remarkably clear. The development of creatures like birds and bats is much more difficult to trace. The fossilated history of man is between the two, with gaps still waiting to be filled. But, as new facts in this realm are discovered, they are all like locks with evolution the key that fits every one.

Embryology is the study of each individual's evolution from his first beginning in a single cell. Whatever may be true about the race, evolution is clearly true of the individual. Each one of us starts with the unicellular form,

which the evolutionist presupposes, and comes through slow development to his maturity. Now, in this individual evolution, traces are left of the racial history which lies behind. As experts study the prenatal development, they see in a telescoped, truncated form a partial recapitulation of the race's story. This must not be overstated. An embryo has more important business than retaining a record of racial evolution. But it is true that as a psychologist discerns in a growing boy a rough recapitulation of racial history, so that one can detect in the individual the savage stage gradually becoming half-civilized, which once took place in the race, so the biologist sees in the embryo an abbreviated racial history. And in some cases—as with the antlers of the red deer, where we have the story from fossils and discern in the embryological development of the red deer to-day an unmistakable correspondence—the evidence is impossible to explain away.

Comparative Anatomy is the study of the similarities and differences between structures of living creatures. The results have been extraordinary. Bone for bone, muscle for

muscle, organ for organ, scientists find unmistakable correspondence between the different species, until they can be arranged in series and made to display with what slight modifications they might have passed from one to the other. "The paddle of a turtle, the wing of a bird, the flipper of a whale, the foreleg of a horse, and the arm of a man" reveal the same essential bones and muscles merely adjusted to different environments and tasks. This witness of comparative anatomy to the kinship of all living creatures is emphasized when man's body is scrutinized. We are full of structures that we do not use and whose only reasonable explanation is that they are left-overs from an earlier estate when they were useful. A rudimentary tail with a set of caudal muscles, a cartilaginous remnant of a pointed ear which almost every man can distinguish even with his finger, useless muscles employed by other animals in moving ears or erecting hair, miniature third eyelids essential in reptiles and birds but useless in man—so the list runs until Wiedersheim says that there are no less than one hundred and eighty vestigial structures in the human body. Of such things Darwin was

thinking when he wrote, "We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that Man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."

Contemporary evolution is another field of evidence. There is no use saying that new species cannot develop, since we can make them develop. Luther Burbank could condense, abbreviate, control evolution and make new kinds of flowers and trees. The most valuable spring wheat to-day, they say, is Marquis wheat—three hundred million bushels of it raised in North America in 1918. Twenty-three years ago there was only one known kernel of Marquis wheat in existence. Men, by controlling and shortening evolutionary processes, had made a new variety. Evolution is not simply historical; it is contemporary and, within restricted limits imposed by brevity of

time and by the necessity of crossing existent species, can be observed and directed.

There are other areas of evidence, such as blood-tests, which remarkably confirm the relative kinship of living creatures indicated by comparative anatomy. No brief outline such as this can possibly do justice to the immense range of investigation, the detailed scrutiny of facts, the overwhelming conclusiveness of confirmatory testimony which has convinced scientists of evolution's truth. To-day the upset of the Copernican hypothesis is just about as probable as the upset of evolution. As Professor Edwin Grant Conklin, of Princeton, has said: "There is probably not a single biological investigator in the world to-day who is not convinced of the truth of evolution."

IV

If, now, it be true, as so many are saying, that this acceptance of evolution is fatal to religion, then the situation is serious indeed. But is it true? What is there in evolution for Christians to fear? For one thing, some people in deep anxiety say that evolution is not in the

Bible. Of course it is not in the Bible. Neither is radio, nor the aeroplane, the Copernican astronomy, Newtonian gravitation, nor Einstein's relativity. Who in his right senses turns to the Bible as a text-book in modern science? The great poem on creation with which the Bible opens is a magnificent expression of faith in one supreme God and in this universe as his handiwork, but it is not modern science. If one is going to insist on the Bible as an infallible guide in science, he must go a long way back before any of our modern views of the world were even dreamed of. He must believe that the earth is flat with "fountains of the great deep" underneath; that it is stationary, "established that it cannot be moved"; that the sky is a solid firmament, "strong as a molten mirror," and beyond it "the waters that are above the heavens"; that the rain comes from the supercelestial sea, let down through "the windows of heaven"; and that the sun, moon, and stars move across the stationary firmament to illumine man. There is no possibility of identifying this ancient outlook on the universe, its flat earth so cozily tucked beneath the coverlet of heaven, with modern science. We

are doing the faith of our generation an incalculable injury when we try thus to use the Bible for purposes that it never was meant to serve, like the foolish servant who employed her master's flute to beat the rugs with. What gain is there in trying to make scientific fact out of the creation of light on this earth three days before there was a sun; or trying to identify seven days, each with an evening and a morning, with geologic ages never dreamed of until a few years ago?

One pleads thus, not to discredit the Book, but to save it for its rightful service to the lives of men. The distinctive glory of the Bible has never been that it taught science. The wonder is that the Bible has survived that ruinous employment of it. The abiding usefulness of the Book lies in its appeal to the unchanging spiritual needs and experiences of men. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"—that does not change with changing sciences. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself"—that does not alter with altering biologies. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to

another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you"—that does not shift with shifting philosophies.

When, therefore, a man says that evolution is not in the Bible, the answer seems plain: Of course evolution is not in the Bible any more than modern chemistry and physics are there; what difference does that make? Every step of development in science has been bitterly fought by literalists quoting texts from Scripture. That procedure in every case has proved not a defense of the faith, but a destruction of faith in the minds of multitudes. Let us not repeat that old and stupid misuse of Scripture. Let us use the Bible for what it is, the supreme Book of spiritual life, and not an infallible text-book on the physical sciences.

V

A far more serious difficulty with evolution is found in those who insist that evolution crowds out God. That has a strangely familiar sound. Men said that when the new astronomy came in. The Church promoted Father Caccini for preaching a sermon which, punning

on Galileo's name, had for its text, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven?" and which, before it was through, had called all geometry "of the devil" and had said that "mathematicians should be banished as the authors of all heresies." Men despaired of God also when Newton announced his law of gravitation. They said he "took from God that direct action on his works so constantly ascribed to him in Scripture and transferred it to material mechanism," and "substituted gravitation for Providence." We need not be surprised, therefore, to hear a clergyman say that evolution is "an attempt to dethrone God."

As a matter of fact, God is not so easily disposed of as these faint-hearts of little faith seem to think.

Of course, a childish picture of God as an individual off somewhere, inhabiting a local heaven, tending to his favorites with affectionate indulgence, and thought of in man-size terms, is made impossible, not by evolution only, but by the whole modern outlook on the universe. But whether evolutionists or not, we still face the eternal Creative Power from whose boundless resources this cosmos and all

things in it have come and are coming, and still we face the problem of that Power's character. Is dynamic dirt going it blind a sufficient description? Has the accidental concourse of physical atoms produced all that is, from the ordered stars to "Plato's brain" and "Lord Christ's heart"? Or at the creative center of the universe are there other forces akin to those which arise in us as intelligence, purposefulness, and good-will? Which is the more reasonable explanation—God or no-God? No scientific evolutionist supposes that by his evolutionary doctrine he has touched that question. It has been said so often that it ought to begin to seep in by this time that evolution deals with the methods of creation, not with its ultimate Creator.

On the one side is the special creationist's view of God making this world by fiat at a definite time in the past. While most of this school would not be so specific as Dr. John Lightfoot who in 1642 dated the creation of the physical universe as Sunday, October 23, 4004 B. C., and the creation of man the following Friday, "at about the third hour, or nine of the clock in the morning," the special creationist's

view, when it is made explicit, always involves some such idea that the universe was suddenly created on a definite date and that upon this earth each species was separately produced, and man, in particular, leaped, as it were, full-statured into being, like Minerva from the head of Jove. On the other side stands the theistic evolutionist's view of an indwelling, purposeful Power, the Creative Spirit of the Living God unfolding, by slow gradation across measureless ages in a process where literally a thousand years are as one day, this immense developing cosmos and on the earth slowly bringing forth life crowned in the possibilities of man. That latter view seems to me far and away the sublimest outlook on the creative activity of the Eternal that man has ever had. At any rate, there is no real excuse for a man to give up God simply because he gives up the special creationist's view of him. There is no logical sequence in saying that if God did not make the world in that old way he therefore did not make the world.

In the city of New York are homes where women and children late into the night manu-

facture paper flowers. However one may deplore the pathetic necessity that drives them, one does admire the marvelous dexterity with which they work—a few swift strokes of the fingers and the flower is made. But in our gardens flowers are being made in another way altogether by a process so different that one would almost think that they were making themselves. An ugly bulb in which no one with superficial sight could perceive a latent flower is planted and not swiftly, but gradually, not by fiat, but by growth, flowers are made. Which is the more wonderful way of making them?

When I, for one, look back to the picture that in childhood I had of God's creative activity and now think of this strange, terrific, adventurous universe in which I live, where from unpromising beginnings in which human eye, could it have been there, would have seen no spiritual potency, has come this amazing development crowned in aspiring character and hopes of a kingdom of righteousness on earth, not for the sake of science only, but for the sake of religion and the enlarged view of God, I would not for the world go back.

VI

A more considerable difficulty for many people is the effect of evolution on their estimate of man. If man has descended, or ascended, from monkeys, that degrading faith, they think, puts an end to all high appraisals of man's origin, worth, meaning, and destiny. To be sure, science does not say that man descended from monkeys, but that man and monkeys alike descended on different lines of development from some parent form. But that accurate statement of what biologists teach, while it spoils many jests about monkey ancestors and outlaws such silly slogans as "God or Gorilla," does not solve the deeper problem. However it may be phrased, evolution to many people seems to degrade man. He used to be a son of God; now he seems to be a developed animal.

If evolution does thus brutalize man's conception of his own nature, it is a public enemy. We have a hard enough problem, as it is, dealing with the animalism of human nature. When Tennyson wrote,

> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die,

he was describing one of man's innermost problems, but Tennyson printed that nine years before Darwin published The Origin of Species. The poet was not dealing primarily with evolution, but with ordinary human experience. We may not wish to claim blood relationship with the tiger, but, if ever some wanton insult has let loose in us the storm of an ungovernable temper, we must confess to a moral kinship with the tiger deeper than any blood-tests can reveal. We may not like to acknowledge relationship with the monkeys, but we are extraordinarily fortunate if more than once in sheer wantonness and folly we have not played the monkey in ways that make us hate ourselves on every remembrance of it. The plain fact is that, whether evolutionists or not, we are dealing with the problem of animalism and brutality in man.

If, now, evolution sanctions the acceptance of man's animalism as normal, regnant and ineradicable, that helps immeasurably to defeat man's better self. If sensuality can say to man, You are only an animal by origin and

nature; science says so; why try to be anything else?—that helps the beast. If greed, cruelty, chicanery, militarism can say, Being by origin an animal you inevitably plunge into a selfish fight where the strong win and the weak are crowded to the wall; why contend against it?—that helps the beast. Evolution obviously can be used to support animalism, and nobody should take that so seriously to heart as the man who thinks evolution true.

Serious consideration, however, ought to reveal the fact that estimating the nature and worth of anything in terms of its beginnings is a perilous practice. If, listening to the ecstatic music of some symphony, we should be told that such music is not really beautiful, but that, capable of being traced back through a long story of development to tom-toms and beaten sticks, it is revealed by these origins to be a crude and savage thing, we surely should not be impressed. In a world where everything can be traced back to primitive origins, one must agree to sink all life to a dead level of futility and worthlessness, if he once undertakes to judge value on the basis of beginnings. St. Peter's dome can be traced back to the first

mud hut; the Sistine Madonna can be traced back to the caveman's scratches on the rocks; fine family life can be followed to the beginning of its trail in some man of the old stone age pursuing a woman; Shakespere's sublimities can be reduced to crude origins in the first grunts of prehistoric men; and in general all things wise, good and beautiful in life can be discredited by being ascribed to low beginnings.

From which consideration a clear truth arises: you cannot estimate the worth, meaning, or nature of anything by its early stages. You do not judge the oak by the acorn, but the acorn by the oak. You do not estimate the man by the embryo, but the embryo by the man. Everything is worth, not what it starts with, but what it grows to be.

Everything is to be judged by what it has capacity to become.

Nothing whatever, therefore, is decided about man's value or destiny by changing our statement of the route by which he came. As a man may arrive in New York City by ship, train, automobile, or aeroplane, but in any case is what he is regardless of the method by which he journeyed, so man is made no whit different

in nature or worth when special creation gives place to evolution in the description of his arrival.

A violin in the hands of a great performer playing the Fifth Symphony is a marvelous instrument. If, now, for the first time one learned that violins are composed of wood and catgut, would he say that the violin is something other than it was before? Obviously there are two approaches to understanding the violin. From the standpoint of origins, it is made of lowly materials; from the standpoint of value, it is an instrument made for high purposes on which the master compositions of the ages can be played. So man, in point of his beginnings, comes from a lowly start. The book of Genesis says that God made him out of the dust of the earth. There is no lower point to start with than that.

What difference does it make to religion whether God out of the dust of the earth made man by fiat or out of the dust of the earth made him by gradual processes? No matter by what route he came, man is what he is, with his intelligence, his moral life, his spiritual possibilities, his capacity for fellowship with God.

To many minds the central problem in this realm concerns man's soul—his invisible personality, with intelligence, purposefulness, good-will centered in an abiding self-consciousness. Where in the course of evolution, they ask, did this selfhood get into man? When did his soul begin? To which one may well reply by asking another question: In the course of each individual's evolution from conception to maturity, where did his selfhood begin and his soul come upon the scene? The problem is no different for the race than it is for the individual. We each began with a physical basis in which a human eye could see no promise of spiritual result, and we each emerged at last to be, not a body, but a soul built in a body like a temple in a scaffolding, and believing in the perpetuity of the inner structure when the outer framework has been taken down. If that be true of us one by one, why may it not be true of the race?

The idea, therefore, that evolution degrades man is pointless. Suppose that one of us by some lapse of memory believed that he had been made mature, like Adam and Eve, in our father's faith, created adult, with no history

behind. And suppose then he should learn the truth about his lowly beginning and the strange history through which from his conception he had passed. Would he say, That degrades me; I could have been a son of God upon the other hypothesis, but not now? There is no sense in such argument at all. He is the same man he was before—a spiritual being in whom God can dwell with transforming power.

Let the scientists, therefore, work out the physical route by which man came. They might change the description of it every year and not affect vital religion. Still our problem is the same. Still we are spiritual beings who can fall from our high estate into brutality, or we can claim our heritage as "children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

WILL SCIENCE DISPLACE GOD?

I

In one of our American colleges founded long ago in piety and faith for the furtherance of the Gospel, a professor recently made a "Senior Chapel Address" frankly skeptical of God and immortality, the key-note of which was sounded in the words, "God becomes progressively less essential to the running of the universe." There is occasion for thought along many lines, not only for religious people but for all our citizenship, in this suggestive spectacle of an American college chapel founded for the worship of God thus transformed into a platform for denying him. But behind all other questions lies the basic issue which the professor raises. He thinks that modern science is making God increasingly unnecessary.

That is the nub of the whole matter in the age-long conflict between science and religion. That way of stating the issue—not that science theoretically disproves God, but that science progressively makes him "less essential"

—correctly focuses the problem. Religious people, fretted by fear of modern views of the world, have comforted themselves with the assurance that science cannot disprove God. Of course it cannot! They have assuaged their grief, mourning the loss of old theologies, by the conviction that, as new telescopes do not destroy the ancient stars, so new ways of viewing God's operations do not negative the Ancient of Days himself. Of course not! But that is not the ultimate issue in the conflict between science and religion. The professor has that matter correctly put. What modern science is doing for multitudes of people, as anybody who watches American life can see, is not to disprove God's theoretical existence, but to make him "progressively less essential."

Although its applications and its consequences are innumerable, the reason for this can be briefly stated. Throughout man's history in the past and among the great majority of people to-day, religion has been and is a way of getting things that human beings want. From rain out of heaven to good health on earth, men have sought the desires of their

hearts at the altars of their gods. Closely associated in its early history with magic—the search for some spell or incantation, some Aladdin's lamp which would make the unseen powers subject to the user—religion has always provided for its devotees methods of worship, forms of ritual, secrets of prayer, or spiritual relationships with God guaranteed to gain for the faithful the benefits they have sought. In every realm of human want and craving, men thus have used religious methods to achieve their aims and, whether they desired good crops, large families, relief from pestilence, or success in war, have conceived themselves as dependent on the favor of heaven. And now comes science, which also is a method of getting what human beings want. That is its most important character. As a theoretical influence it is powerful enough; as a practical influence it is overwhelming. It does provide an astoundingly successful method of getting what men want.

Here is the crucial point of competition between science and religion. In realm after realm where religion has been offering its meth-

ods for satisfying men's desires, science comes with a new method which works with obvious and enormous consequence. Quietly, but inevitably, man's reliance for the fulfilling of his needs slips over from religion to science. Not many men stop to argue against religion—they may even continue to believe it with considerable fervor—but they have less and less practical use for it. The things they daily want are no longer obtained that way. From providing light and locomotion, or stamping out typhus and yellow fever, to the unsnarling of mental difficulty by applied psychology, men turn to another method for their help. God is not disproved; he is displaced. The old picture of a bifurcated universe, where a supernatural order overlies a natural order and occasionally in miraculous interference invades it, becomes incredible. Creation is all of one piece, a seamless garment. And if, now, in this indivisible and law-abiding world we can get what we want by learning laws and fulfilling conditions, why is it not true, as the professor said, that "God becomes progressively less essential to the running of the universe"?

II

It is the more important to visualize this matter clearly and deal with it candidly because the conflict between science and religion is so seldom conceived and faced in terms of this central problem. From the first, an instinctive fear of science has characterized organized religion, as it manifestly characterizes a great deal of American Christianity to-day. That fear is justified and the peril real, but it does not lie in the quarter where it is popularly located.

That modern science is neither the science of the Bible nor the traditional science of the churches, that the ancient Book represents an ancient cosmology no longer tenable, so that the Bible cannot any more be used as a court of appeal on any scientific question whatsoever, became apparent long ago. The point of danger has been commonly supposed to lie there. Genesis versus astronomy, Genesis versus geology, Genesis versus evolution—such have been the major conflicts between the churches and the scientists. But such contentions, large as they have bulked in noise and rancor, are

child's play compared with this other, central, devastating consequence which science is silently but surely working in popular religion. Science to-day is religion's overwhelmingly successful competitor in showing men how to get what they want.

III

This shift of reliance from religious to scientific methods for achieving human aims is so obvious that any man's daily life is a constant illustration of it, and in particular it grows vivid to one who travels in lands where memorials of old religions stand beside the achievements of new science. This would have been a famine year in Egypt in the olden time; so low a Nile would have meant starvation to myriads. One stands amid the ruins of Karnak and reconstructs in imagination the rituals, sacrifices, prayers offered before Amon-Re seeking for help in such a famished year. But no one went to Karnak this year for fear of starving, or to any Coptic church or Moslem mosque or Protestant chapel. Men have got-

ten what they wanted through another kind of structure altogether—the dam at Assuan.

This sort of thing, indefinitely repeated in areas where man's most immediate and clamorous needs lie, constitutes the critical effect of science on religion. It does not so much controvert religion as crowd it out. The historians are saying that it was malaria that sapped the energy of ancient Greece and drained her human resources. For centuries folk must have prayed against their mysterious enemy, sacrificed to the gods, and consulted oracles. From the days of the Dorians to the Christian churches in Corinth and the Moslem mosques that succeeded them, they tried by religious means to stave off their stealthy foe. But when a few months ago the Near East Relief took over old Greek army barracks at Corinth, put two thousand refugee children into them and straightway had twelve hundred cases of malaria, it was an American trained nurse who went into the community and despite apathy, ignorance, piety, and prejudice, cleaned up the whole countryside so that no one need have malaria there again.

Reduplicate that sort of thing interminably

and the consequence is clear: we rely more and more on scientific methods for getting what we want. Travelers among primitive people must remark how deeply and constantly religious they are, so that no hour of the day is free from religious motive. Of course they are thus uninterruptedly religious. They would better be. Religion is the chief way they know of being sure of everything they want, from children to crops, from good health to good hunting. But with us many an area where only religious methods once were known for meeting human needs now is occupied by science, and the mastery of law-abiding forces, which science already has conferred, puts into our hands a power that makes trivial all the Aladdin's lamps magicians ever dreamed. A clever statistician recently has figured that in the mechanical appliances used in the United States in 1919 there was a force equal to over a billion horse-power, and that with a hundred odd million people to be served and each unit of horse-power equal to ten of man-power, every inhabitant of the United States, man, woman, and child, had on the average as good as fifty

human slaves now working for him. There is no limit to the possibilities of that procedure, men think. We can in time have what we want.

Where, then, does God come in? Learn the laws, master the law-abiding forces—that seems to an ever-increasing number the only way to achieve our aims. It holds as true of mind as of matter, as true of morals as of mind. Whether in improving our crops, healing our diseases, educating our children, building our characters, or providing international substitutes for war, always we must learn the laws and fulfil the conditions, and when we do that the consequences will arrive. Such is the scientific method which everywhere wins out as the competitor of traditional religion in meeting human needs. And the upshot is that religion seems ever less necessary: "God becomes progressively less essential."

IV

It is a tragic pity that, with this crucial problem facing religion in its relationship with science, anybody should be wasting time over foregone conclusions like evolution. For this

far-more-central matter must be faced, and it can be faced triumphantly.

In the first place, science may be a competitor of religion conceived as a means of getting what we want, but it is not on that account a competitor of the kind of religion that the great souls of the race have known. Religion at its best never has been merely or chiefly a means of serving man's selfish purposes; it has rather faced men with a Purpose greater than their own which it was their business unselfishly to serve. The real prophets of the spirit have not so much relied on their religion for dole as they have been called by their religion to devotion. They have found religion's meaning, less in getting gifts from it, than in making their lives a gift to it. Religion, as Professor Royce of Harvard kept insisting, is at heart loyalty—loyalty to the highest that we know. The prayer of primitive religion and of a lamentable amount of traditional and current religion is "My will be done," and the sooner science breaks up that kind of sacramental magic, pulverizes that vain reliance on supernatural sleight-of-hand, the better. Real faith will not thereby be touched; that has another sort of

prayer altogether: "Not my will, but thine, be done." Any man who in this morally loose and selfish time undertakes to show that that prayer, translated into life, is less necessary than it used to be has a task on his hands. The generation is sick for lack of it. Our prevalent doctrine of moral anarchy—let yourself go; do what you please; indulge any passing, passionate whim—is a sorry, ruinous substitute for it. God as a benign charity organization that we can impose upon—let science smash up that idea! But God as the Goal of all our living, whose will is righteousness and whose service is freedom—he does not become "progressively less essential." He becomes progressively more essential, and unless we can recover him and learn anew loyalty to the Highest in scorn of consequence, our modern society, like that other group of bedeviled swine, is likely yet to plunge down a steep place into the sea.

Whenever any man discovers something greater than himself and in self-forgetting service gives his life to it, there religion has struck in its roots. There is such a thing as the "religion of science," where men at all costs

and hazards live for the love of truth. Knowing, as I do, some churchmen formally religious but really undevoted to anything greater than themselves, and some scientists formally irreligious but devoted with all their hearts to the love of light, I have no doubt what the judgment of the Most High would be. He who faithfully serves the More-than-self has, in so far, found religion. So there is a religion of art in which men give their lives to beauty, as Ghiberti spent laborious years upon the bronze doors of the Florentine Baptistery that Michelangelo called the Gates of Paradise; and there is a religion of human service where men count others better than themselves and live for the sake of generations yet unborn. The Over-Soul appears to men in many forms and claims allegiance. When, however, man ceases this fragmentary splitting of his ideal world—truth here, beauty there, love yonder—and sees that God *is* love, truth, beauty, and that he who dwells in these and lives for them is dwelling in God and God in him as the New Testament says, he has found religion crowned and consummated. What is there in our modern knowledge that has disparaged this

spirit of devotion to the Highest or made it less necessary? What is there that can possibly take the place of it?

There is nothing peculiarly modern about this idea of religion as loyalty; it is at least as old as Gethsemane, as old as the prison house of Socrates, and the great hours of the Hebrew prophets. It has challenged conscience many a century in those who have thought it needful "to obey God rather than men." Religion may have started with selfish magic but it did not flower out there. It flowered out in a Cross where one died that other men might live abundantly. When that spirit takes modern form, it turns up in folk like Doctor Barlow, a missionary who deliberately swallowed the germs of a Chinese pestilence and then went to Johns Hopkins that by the study of the results the plague, whose nature had been unknown, might be combated. Science is no competitor of that kind of Christianity; that kind of Christianity uses science and all its powers in the service of its God.

It strikes an interested observer of this present generation's life that nothing has happened to make that spirit less necessary than it used

to be. It strikes one that there are some things which a college professor might better say to our youth than that God is becoming less essential.

V

This impression is deepened by another fact. Though the mechanical equivalent of fifty human slaves be serving each of us in the United States, and though that be multiplied as many times as imagination can conceive, by no such scientific mastery of power alone can our deepest needs be met. Religion is, in part, like science, a way of satisfying human wants, but there are wants that science cannot satisfy. The idea that the scientific method by itself can so fulfil the life of man that a new psalm sometime will be written beginning, "Science is my shepherd; I shall not want," and ending, "my cup runneth over," is not borne out by the actual effects of modern knowledge on many of its devotees. Consider this picture of creation drawn by one of them:

> In the visible world the Milky Way is a tiny fragment. Within this fragment the solar system is an

infinitesimal speck, and of this speck our planet is a microscopic dot. On this dot tiny lumps of impure carbon and water crawl about for a few years, until they dissolve into the elements of which they are compounded.

Call that, if you will, a *reductio ad absurdum* of blank skepticism, yet anybody who is acquainted with our colleges knows students who are in that pit or on the verge of it or scattered all up and down the road that leads to it. A purposeless physicochemical mechanism which accidentally came from nowhere and is headed nowhere, which cannot be banked on for moral solvency, and to which we have no more ultimate significance than the flowers have to the weather—that is the scientific universe without religion. Something that man deeply needs is obviously left out of such a world-view. There are human wants, profound and clamorous, which that picture cannot supply.

While it is true therefore, that there are areas where traditional religion and modern science meet in cutthroat competition and where the winning method of getting what men want is sure to be the scientific, it is also true that when every area that belongs to science has been

freely given up to her religion is only liberated, not obliterated. Whether or not a man will think he needs God to supply his wants will depend altogether on what his wants are. He may get his Rolls Royce and his yacht, have his fields irrigated, his houses built, his cuisine supplied, his pestilences stopped, without religion, although one may wonder how much of the stability and vigor of the civilization which produces such results has depended on faith in a morally reliable creation. He may even get health without God, although the experience of most of us is that the body is not well unless the mind is and that the mind is never well without faith and hope. But whatever else he may obtain without God he will still live in a world that, like a raft on the high seas, is aimlessly adrift, uncharted, unguided, and unknown. Any one who has ever supposed this world to be so futile and inconsequential an experiment of chance and now has entered into the faiths and hopes of a vital and sustaining religion will regard with utter incredulity the idea that God has become less essential.

If a man cannot honestly believe in God, let

him honestly say so, but let him not try to fool himself and us by the supposition that he is giving up a superfluity. Never in man's history has faith in God been more necessary to sane, wholesome, vigorous, and hopeful living than to-day amid the dissipating strain and paralyzing skepticism of modern life.

SCIENCE AND MYSTERY

I

In the concluding paragraph of a book on the relationship between science and religion, this startling ultimatum is delivered: "Mysteries must give place to facts." The more one considers it, the more he sees concentrated in that curt and summary dictum a large amount of popular thinking upon the relationship between the known and unknown. With strange cocksureness, folk to-day regard science as a sort of irrigation service, gradually fructifying the waste lands of mystery, until at last all of them shall be reclaimed and cultivated. In university lecture-halls, popular magazines, and Sunday supplements, one finds himself on tip-toe, expectantly awaiting the solution of the last mystery. While, of course, no one claims to have grasped "this sorry scheme of things entire," popular thought, for practical purposes, comes perilously near to living in an explained universe.

Says one writer of the last decade: "Science

brings into camp every day a new fact captured by its pickets, scouting along the line between the known and the unknown. The mysteries are fading away, and if they are the capital of religion, or of the church as the habitation of religion, then the church must be fading away." When one regards the amount of such writing that is being done, playing up in vivid phrase and picturesque description the campaigns of science against ignorance, he is not surprised to find even small children singing:

> Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
> I do *not* wonder what you are.
> What you are I know right well,
> And your component parts can tell.

A certain contrariness of disposition, therefore, such as led the Greek, weary of hearing Aristides always called "The Just," to vote upon the other side, may well induce a man in an "age of science" to collect specimens of the things we do not understand. When once he has begun, however, to be a connoisseur of mystery, more than contrariness keeps him at it. For this lake of being, on which he launches

his craft to search for undiscovered coves, soon proves to be no lake at all, but an open branch of an illimitable sea, on which his skiffs of thought lose themselves over the rim of the world. He finds that the universe is not almost explored by scientific pioneers, but rather that, as Mr. Thomas Edison remarks, "No one knows one seven-billionth of one per cent about anything."

Indeed, Mr. Edison's remark suggests the source from which the most convinced testimonies to our ignorance come. It was to have been expected that religious folk would readily discount knowledge in the interests of faith. That Job in the humility of his spiritual experience should say, "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing"; that Paul with his religious agnosticism should say, "Now we see in a mirror, darkly"—"Now I know in fragments"; that Socrates, conscious of the failure of his philosophy to pierce the opaque depths of life should say, "One thing I know, that I know nothing"; that Emerson, with his love of teasing epigram, should cry, "Knowledge is knowing that we cannot know," was to be anticipated. The really interesting testimonials

to our ignorance come rather from those in whom scientific wisdom is supposed to dwell. There is Mr. Herbert Spencer saying that in its ultimate nature life is incomprehensible. There is Professor William James saying that on an important subject in science's own realm science must confess her imagination to be bankrupt; she has absolutely nothing to affirm; she says, *"ignoramus, ignoramibus."* There is even Professor Ernst Haeckel saying, "We grant at once that the innermost character of nature is just as little understood by us as it was by Anaximander and Empedocles twenty-four hundred years ago, by Spinoza and Newton two hundred years ago, by Kant and Goethe one hundred years ago. We must even grant that this essence and substance become more mysterious and enigmatic the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes."

This last suggestion, that the world grows more mysterious the more we know about it, is somewhat startling. Popular thought commonly regards the clearing up of life's unknown provinces as an enterprise requiring only persistent endeavor and sufficient time. Given so much habitable land of the known,

men think, our problem is to invade and cultivate as rapidly as possible the waste land of mystery. But the relationship between the two is not thus quantitative, so that the more you have of one the less you have of the other. Science is no pioneering king whose conquests gradually subdue the Empire of Ignorance until at last he shall weep for more worlds to conquer. Rather, the more we know about the world, the more mysterious it is. Sunrise to our fathers was strange enough, and they used at daybreak to sing a hymn to greet the coming dawn, but it is stranger now, when upon the surface of this wheeling earth we feel ourselves move in space as the sun brims the hill. This new universe created for us by our modern science, with its microscopic marvels, its reign of law, its innumerable stars, and, after the leisureliness and patience of the ages, with us upon the thin skin of this revolving planet in the sky, is more mysterious by far than that flat earth that once was cozily tucked beneath the coverlet of heaven.

When in 1836 Comte declared that it would be forever impossible to measure the distance to the stars, the world thought that it faced a

mystery; but when in 1838 Bessel did measure the distance to star 61 Cygni, the world found itself plunged into a real mystery that even yet staggers the imagination. Reveal a little information concerning the relation of mind to body and you raise more interrogations than you quell. Establish the mutability of species and you stir up more hares than you run down. The world with ether undiscovered was strange enough, but what with ether's eerie activities now exposed in bewildering array, and ether itself capable of no better definition than "the nominative case of the verb, to undulate," we are plunged into a mystifying world the perplexing like of which our sires never imagined. A cosmos in which we are told that it would take 250,000 years to count the atoms in a pin-head has not been noticeably simplified, especially when we are assured that those atoms revolve about each other in sidereal systems with a regularity as fixed, and at distances comparatively as great, as belong to stars and planets in the heavens.

Could we suppose that an African savage knew what was going on inside the painted stick he calls his fetish, we could well forgive

him for falling in obeisance before the marvel of it. Nor is the mystery greatly lessened when science changes her hypothesis and says that there are no gross and carnal atoms, but spirituelle electrons instead.

II

Mystery is not a transient trouble in human experience to be removed by increasing knowledge. Rather, it is a permanent problem made more urgent by increasing knowledge. Even the most ordinary falling stone, so far from being explained, is made by the law of gravitation so incomprehensible that Mr. Huxley says, "Whoso appreciates all that is implied in the falling of a stone can have no difficulty about any doctrine simply on account of its marvelousness." The more a man knows, therefore, the more full of wonder he finds the world. The conceit of ignorance is to be explained by this suggestive fact that there are mysteries outside the range of the ordinary mind. It was a young child who said, "Now if you will tell me who made God, I think I shall understand everything"; it was a learned

philosopher who said, "The natural world is an incomprehensible scheme, so incomprehensible that a man must really, in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance in it."

Many a modern man, therefore, begins to recover from his first enthusiasm over a scientifically explained universe. He cannot see that, for all that science has told him, he is one whit the less mysterious. When he deeply considers himself, he is still an utterly incredible creature. That this "forked Radish with a head fantastically carved" should be trotting up and down on this outlandish planet in the sky, shooting through space seventy-five times faster than a cannon ball; that it should be laughing and crying here, loving and hating, making such ado and consequence about itself, is far more marvelous than the wildest dreams of the apocalyptic prophets. Almost anything is likely to happen in a world where what we see about us has actually managed to happen. Indeed, it is so unimaginably strange that we are alive at all, that for us to keep on being alive in spite of death would be an inconsiderable addition to the mystery. To find ourselves

still existing in another world would be far less queer than to have found ourselves existing in the first place.

Science has wrought many achievements, but it has not cleared up a single elemental mystery, and it has created a thousand lesser mysteries that never were imagined until science came. Science has demonstrated that this oak of a world used to be an acorn, but how that acorn came into existence or whence it obtained the latent elements that now have become an oak, science has not suggested. Science has made it possible for a manufacturer to cut down three trees in his forest at 7.35 in the morning, to have them made into paper at 9.34, and to have them selling on the street as newspapers at 10.25; but whether the manufacturer, himself, is a brain that has a mind, or is a mind that has a brain, science cannot even guess.

When, therefore, one runs across some cocksure and dogmatic book, whether it be written by scientist or theologian, one well may turn from it with an overwhelming sense of its unreality to listen to Robert Louis Stevenson:

> What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or

lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming;—and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the Deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing, with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop.

That this recurrent sense of wonder is justified, despite all that science has achieved, is

easily to be seen. However far back, for example, the scientist traces the journey which the universe has traveled, he comes at last to the pillars of Hercules, over which "plus ultra" is written, but through which no scientific investigation ever can pass. Nothing has been changed in the problem of life's import by the substitution of milleniums for Bishop Usher's 4004 B.C. Only now we have a longer walk before we arrive at that postern gate and look out into the great unknown from which the universal process comes. Nor can the philosopher here overreach the scientist and claim knowledge of the world's origin. All the systems of metaphysics ever framed have this thing true of them: they are not rationales of a known universe, but attempted rationales of the philosopher's faith about a universe unknown. He, too, stood at the postern gate and sent his soul on its great venture. He, too, believed before he reasoned, reasoned because he first believed, and used his logic to confirm or criticize his faith.

Whatever any man thinks about the cause of life is primarily faith. To be sure, it need not be a mere guess, a chance throw of voli-

tion's dice, without cause before or reasoned explanation afterward, but it must always be an hypothesis, ventured first and then defended. When Von Hartmann says, "The wholly blank and vague and limitless immensity which knows nothing of itself and which is so aberrant from its fundamental condition as to produce, contrary to its inherent nature, conscious beings who must suffer and wail and agonize as long as they are conscious," that is faith. When John says, "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him," that too is faith. The materialist who plants in the vast flower-pot of chaos his primal seed of matter and, like a gigantic master of legerdemain, waves his wand of words over it until the whole flowering universe grows from the dirt, is exercising faith as evidently as is the Christian when he rejoices in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Moreover, if, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, a man steadfastly endeavors to restrain his thought within the boundaries of demonstrable knowledge, he will not even then escape the influence of the unknown. What revealing

words at the close of Mr. Spencer's autobiography about "the all-embracing mystery" which lies behind all lesser mysteries! "And along with this," he adds, "rises the paralyzing thought—what if, of all that is thus incomprehensible to us, there exists no comprehension anywhere?" Even he finds his valuation of the unknown tingeing his estimate of life.

A man's faith may be perplexed or positive, paralyzing or jubilant, but some thought or other about the "all-embracing mystery" a man is almost sure to have, and the more thoughtful he is, the more his world of present facts will take color like a chameleon from his conviction about the mysterious world that lies beneath it. At any rate, for all science's achievements, he well may say,

> It's strange that God should fash to frame
> The yearth and lift sae hie,
> An' clean forget to explain the same
> To a gentleman like me.

III

Even more obviously is science unable to dispel mystery when its attention is directed

to the future. The problem of to-morrow is so utterly out of reach of knowledge that science must dismiss its consideration as futile guesswork. Yet it makes a real difference to life what a man thinks about the future; or if a man stoutly refuse to think, that makes a difference too. Men who by some weird chance should find themselves upon a ship, ignorant alike of its port of departure and its destination, might preoccupy themselves with many tasks, whether selfishly to get the best of the ship's store or fraternally to contribute to the common weal, but how could the question of their unknown haven be quenched among them? Could they so thin their thought and narrowly concentrate their attention, as never to stand at the ship's prow and think of that? Though some should lack imagination to care and some should drown their care in drink or smother it in work, the tone of the crew's spirit, the hopelessness or joy or dogged resolution with which the sails were set, and the discipline preserved, subtly would depend on what idea of the haven was gaining the popular assent—that it was good or evil, or that there was no

haven, only an endless sailing of the sea by a ship that never would arrive.

This interest in the future is not by any means the child of immature and ignorant curiosity. It is rather the immature and ignorant who feel the problem least, like those stolid and unquestioning natives of the African forest who never have been curious enough to inquire whether the sun that rises this morning is the same that set last night. The more man grows in intellectual range, the more it becomes impossible for him to row his boat with his back in the direction whither he is going, guiding his skiff by his wake alone, and never turning to scan the horizons ahead. Is this world of sacrifice and heart-break, of love and death, to have an outcome that will make the price of it worth while? Or do we face the slowly waning vitality of earth, its light dimmed, its heat consumed, its forces spent and wasted, until at last upon this wandering island in the sky some solitary Robinson Crusoe, the last living soul in the universe, stumbles over the graves of the race in a vain search for some Black Friday to bear him company?

If a man is persuaded, as many apparently

are, that beyond the immediate balance of joy over sorrow which may exist, no real victory of good over evil is to be expected, whether we as individuals share in it or not; that so far from being "heirs of hopes too fair to turn out false," humanity has been duped by its optimisms, not in form alone but in substance also, and that men, however fine in spiritual nature or great in serviceable ministry, are just so much "high-grade cosmic fertilizer" for a future harvest which at last will come to nothing; if he vividly perceive the meaning of such a lack of issue to the world, that humanity like a rocket, radiant in ascent and splendidly luminous in climax, in the end is but a falling stick, sans light, sans life, sans goal, sans everything, —surely such a conception of life's issue will stain through into the texture of his most common day.

It is indeed open for a man to say that even so each one should "hold hard by his great soul, do out the duty." After the Greeks at Chaeronea had been irremediably defeated by Philip of Macedon, Demosthenes still turned on the Athenians to say, "I maintain that if the issue of this struggle had from the outset

been manifest to the whole world, not even then ought Athens to have shrunk from it, if Athens has any regard for her own glory, her past history, or her future reputation." Many noble men have so faced life with no thought of victory for themselves or for their race. But at its best this is a dogged and stoical nobility, an obdurate and joyless heroism. It makes all service of personal and social ideals a toilsome search for gold at the end of a rainbow, after the myth is disbelieved and disillusion has fallen on the quest.

If good may hope to conquer evil in some localities for some limited extent of time, but no conclusive and general victory can possibly arrive; if we are attempting to impose moral ideals upon an alien and inhospitable world, with dubious show of success now and certainty of failure in the end; if, in a word, in a Saharan universe, sterile of all spiritual meaning, we are vainly striving with our little atomizers to produce fertility, then it would still be best not to shrink from the conflict. But the more lucidly a man should perceive how thus all large human hopes were illusions in essence as well as form, the more difficult would it be for him

to keep heart in the struggle. Humanity in such a world would lack even the incentive that Demosthenes gave to Athens, "her future reputation." The persistence of religious faith is due in part to this, that the race, like her best individuals, has passionately desired

> Not without aim to go round
> In an eddy of purposeless dust,
> Effort unmeaning and vain.

At any rate, one begins curiously to wonder just what the intellectual basis is for that ultimatum, "Mysteries must give place to facts."

IV

Strangely enough, the part of life from which science has least of all succeeded in expelling mystery, is not life's first source nor yet its ultimate goal, but rather that very province which knowledge has chosen for her own—the world of present facts. "Here," says a follower of Comte, "let us abide contented within the home of positive experience; why wander outside into the unknown and the unknowable?" But no man ever yet succeeded

in treating daily experience as merely a receptacle for information. We all are active appreciators of life; we insist on value as well as fact; we demand interpretations, like Belshazzar offering royal rewards for the meaning of the enigmatic characters upon the wall. The scientific facts of the world are like the physicist's analysis of the sunset into its constituent ether waves. The poet, however, enraptured with the sunset, goes far beyond the physicist's description. He dresses the ether waves in his appreciations. They walk no more unclothed, but richly decked in his discernments and interpretations. The poet's sunset consists of the beauty which his insight finds there, and this perception of beauty is a personal affirmation, a judgment of value, a leap of esthetic faith.

How large a part of life's real content lies in this mystical realm of value is at once evident. For special purposes some factual aspect of reality may be separated from the rest and on that our attention centered, as when the police officer describes a boy in terms of his Bertillon measurements, or a botanist analyzes the constitution of a flower. But this specially

abstracted phase of an experience is not the whole of it, as one learns when the mother's evaluation of the boy bursts into passionate expression, or Wordsworth sings about the daffodils. In practical living such appraisals of any object can no more be separated from our knowledge of it than color can be separated from a Venetian vase. The coloring of worth is blown into the very substance of our thought. Every familiar fact of daily experience is thus a trysting place of information and insight, a habitation where value is wedded to fact.

The sciences make it their business to insulate certain special aspects of the world from the influence of this evaluating instinct. They seek the bare and unappreciated facts. For the biologist, in so far as he strictly adheres to the standpoint of his science, all living organisms are nothing more than physical tissues whose operations are controlled by unalterable laws. His duty is to describe and analyze, and in terms of proximate causes and effects to explain the facts. For the purposes of his science, the nerves of a frog and the nerves of a Michelangelo, the brain of a newt and of a Newton would be equally objects of his re-

gard. They are all biological tissue. He does not value his facts as good or beautiful; he does not regard them as ends or means for personal purposes; he does not ask their significance in a world-scheme; and if he be a strict biologist he does not even so far prefer one fact to another as to desire healthy tissue rather than pathological. All organisms are for him nothing but objects for observation and report.

This isolation of a single aspect of reality and this impersonal attitude in the study of it are necessary and legitimate. Without them organized knowledge would be impossible. Even when the science is psychology, and the data are sensation, judgment, emotion, will, these facts must be insulated from all appraisal of values and studied as neutrally as though a geologist were analyzing rocks or an astronomer observing stars. As the chemist studies foods and poisons with equal zest, so the psychologist studies joy and sorrow, remorse and hope, without preference. They are facts impersonally to be observed, and in terms of natural law to be explained.

Men, however, become obsessed by this prac-

tical method of the sciences. They regard this abstracted aspect of existence, these physical and psychical facts and laws, as the entire world of reality, and even postulate explanations which fit the isolated material of some special science as an adequate philosophy of life. But neither is the material of the sciences the whole of reality nor is science's explanation of that material all of truth. After science has measured and weighed any group of facts, ascertained their quantitative aspects and determined the law of their sequence, we insist on discerning qualitative aspects everywhere. Appreciations and preferences, woven into the factual warp, make the real texture of our experience.

By as much as a living man, lured by ideals, mastered by purposes, pleased by hopes, exalted by love, differs from the manikin in the medical school, with his painted nerves and wooden muscles, by so much does the real world of life differ from the definitions of science. All that produces civilization and art springs from this over-world of value-judgments and worth-estimates. All cathedrals and paintings,

all poetry, romance, music, and religion are their children.

This world of insight and purpose, of value and ideal, is the world in which man actually lives. The attitude of science, drawing off the sense of worth from life and isolating the remainder, is an artifice convenient but not comprehensive. No scientist lives up to it when he leaves his laboratory and goes home.

Indeed, when the scientist reaches home where the free play of his appreciation clothes his life with worth, he might well commune with himself in some such way as this:

"My science certainly does not exhaust the real meaning of my life. The mystery forever escapes the test-tube. When science has said the last word about my children, they mean infinitely more to me than science has declared, and no investigation ever can discover how much a home is worth. I accumulate facts in my laboratory, but unvalued facts are uncracked nuts—the meat of them is unpossessed. It takes more than science to get at the meat of life: it takes the sense of worth. If I, therefore, must value facts in order to live at all, why do I complain because my friend, the preacher, feels for life as a whole what I feel for some of the parts?

As in a musical composition the estimate of

any phrase must in the end consider the organizing motif and complete effect of the whole work, so, facing as we do the necessity of valuing things, ideas, persons, institutions, social movements, all of which are by innumerable relationships intermeshed and unified, where shall we stop this operation short of interpreting the whole? At what point shall we say to appreciation, "Thus far and no farther"? Events do not stand like bottles in the rain, disparate and unrelated, sharing neither their emptiness nor their abundance, but like interflowing rivulets they are so reticulated that to trace the spring and issue of one is to trace the springs and issues of them all. The complete appraisal of the least item subtly involves the appraisal of the sum. No detail is the whole of itself; the universe is the rest of it.

Religion is the appreciation of life's meaning as a whole. It does for the bare facts of the world what the poet's vision does for the ether waves of the sunset or a mother's love for the Bertillon measurements of a boy. It clothes them with radiant meanings. It perceives in them eternal worth and significance. It lifts the ponderous world to its ear as we lift a sea-

shell, and hears mysterious messages of hope and peace. It is evaluation in its most exalted and comprehensive exercise. At any rate, when the laboratory has answered its last question and all other sciences have added their results to the pile, the real mystery of life has not yet been even touched.

V

Upon this three-fold mystery, the world's cause, the world's goal, and the world's meaning, rests the perpetuity of religion. In Professor John Fiske's phrase, she is yet "the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth." The mourners have gathered many times to give her remains a decent burial, but the obsequies have always been indefinitely postponed. The deceased was always too lively for the funeral. In Butler's *Analogy* we are informed that the fashionable society of his day was convinced that Christianity had already one foot in the grave. Shortly after, however, Wesley and Whitefield arrived to guide one of the most amazing religious renewals in all history. Re-

ligion has an indefatigable ability to come back. The reason for this lies deep. Many fantastic and exaggerated ambitions have invited human endeavor, but none so wild and quixotic as the attempt to abide contented within the realm of positively known facts. No one ever abode there for a single hour, and there is not enough such knowledge extant for a man to live on during his most simple day. The mind continuously colors and manipulates all life by its interpretations. Like loose type, the facts are set by ventures of faith into gloomy, humdrum prose or into exalted poetry.

Now, a wholesome religion is simply that form of faith which alone has succeeded in making life worth while; which fills it with purpose, dignifies it with value, inspires it with motive, and comforts it with hope. In an age of science, as much as ever before in all history, religion says:

> Without me you grow to learn a little about the world you live in, your minds limited on every side by boundaries across which they look into deep mystery; without me you rejoice in the transient beauties of the world and more in human loves and friendships, you suffer much with broken bodies

and more with broken family ties, and then die as you were born, the spawn of mindless, soulless forces that never purposed you and never cared. As with yourselves, so with your fellows—they came from nowhere save the dust and go nowhither save back to it again, and without me the whole world is purposeless, engaged with blind hands that have no mind behind them on tasks that mean nothing and are never done.

The recuperative power of religion lies in the elemental unwillingness of men to live in such a world. The parvenues of science who a generation ago foresaw the downfall of religion,—"In fifty years your Christianity will have died out," said one,—are going to be as disappointed as was the fashionable society of Butler's day. For there is more to life than science ever can deal with, and so far as the eternal problems of our human lot are concerned, all the sciences together are like inch-worms clambering up the Matterhorn in an endeavor to discover the distance to the stars.

This does not mean that science has no effect upon religion. Science affects religion tremendously. Science lays violent hold on old traditions, long hallowed in pious sentiment, and

scatters them in scorn to the four winds. Science invades the realm of history, with no regard for the part of it called sacred, and like Antiochus Epiphanes rides on a war-horse into the very Holy of Holies to see whether the tales of it be true. Science takes old arguments, long used in defense of the faith, and makes them as obsolete as bows and arrows at Verdun. Science with pitiless disregard of anything but sheer truth, gives old cosmologies the lie, although the church weeps for her dead like Rachel for her children and will not be comforted. Science, an absolute monarch in her own realm, will let no sacred books, no sacred customs, no sacred history, escape the alembic of her investigations and no consideration can thwart her progress toward one goal, the truth.

When, however, science has laid bare the last fact concerning the religious history of man, when she has cut the ground from under ecclesiastical traditions until the hearts of the priests melt like water, and has sent into eternal exile legends and myths grown hoary in popular belief, religion herself is perennial still. In the end she renews her vigorous youth, and rises relieved from burdensome encumbrances. Still

her proper province is unravaged by an enemy. Still men, knowing all that science can discover touching the sense of moral obligation, curiously question whether, like Haeckel, they shall say that the sense of duty is "a long series of phyletic modifications in the phronema of the cortex," or like Wordsworth, discern there the "Stern daughter of the Voice of God." Still grief imperiously insists on an interpretation, some Paul, upon the one side, saying, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory," and on the other, some Bertrand Russell with his hopeless skepticism: "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark." Still men lift their eyes to the stars and wonder whether he was right who called the universe "a mechanical process in which we may discover no aim or purpose whatever" or whether the heavens do declare the glory of God. Still men curiously question whether they are souls with transient bodies, or bodies with transient souls, and the whole world of life with its abysmal mysteries insists on being interpreted. "He must have been an ill-

advised god who could make no better sport than to change himself into so lean and hungry a world"; so Schopenhauer. And Paul? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!"

This prodigious difference lies not in the fact; it lies in the interpretation of the fact. It is not a contest of science; it is a contest of insight and evaluation, of vision and faith, and all the hosts of argument and reason which these marshal in their support. This involves no quarrel between faith and knowledge. There is no such quarrel. Here, as everywhere, faith is the only road to knowledge, for whether in astronomy or theology the facts are explained by ventures of theory first, which are verified as best they can be afterward. No one has put it better than President Pritchett of the Carnegie Institute: "Science is grounded in faith just as is religion, and scientific truth, like religious truth, consists of hypotheses never wholly verified, that fit the facts more or less closely."

A true theology uses the same intellectual methods that a true science does, but theology

and religion are not identical. Religion is the life of which theology is the theoretic formulation. Religion puts on creeds like garments, and wears them as a science does hypotheses, until, worn out, they must be thrown aside for better. But religion herself still persists. For religion is a warm confidence in the testimony of a man's best hours that the spiritual life is real, and in the witness of the world's greatest souls that God is good. Religion is living as though our life were no amateur theatrical display from which we may retire at will, but urgent business where fidelity and serviceableness contribute to a victory of righteousness that in the end will surely come. Religion is brotherliness inspired by the assurance that something in the universe abides forever, grows and bears fruit at last, and that this eternal element is not the lowest, dirt, but the loftiest, personality. Religion is a well-spring of character born of friendship with the Power not ourselves, and of cordial trust in him and self-surrender to his will. The obsequies of religion are not yet due! Humanity is too deathlessly athirst for some such revelation of Eternal Goodness, and some such interpretation of

life's deep significance as Christians have always found in Christ.

When science has answered her last question, man still will be saying,

> Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
> Let her, if she would owe me,
> Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
> The breasts o' her tenderness.

THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY

I

On easter morning in a Christian church not what goes on in the chancel but what goes on in the nave is much the more interesting. From the chancel the familiar Easter hymns are announced, the triumphant anthems sung, the confident sermon preached, the Scriptures read in which ancient believers expressed their ardent faith. But in the nave are all sorts of ordinary people who in their secret thought harbor every imaginable kind of idea about the mystery of death and what comes after it. To one who sees both sides of the matter, a startling hiatus divides the resounding certainty of sermon, creed, and anthem from the thoughts which multitudes of individuals secretly entertain about immortality.

In a typical metropolitan congregation on Easter morning how many different sorts of thinking will be going on! Some of the congregation will be convinced that, after all, a man would better satisfy himself with one life

at a time, make the most of that, and not worry about any other. When Henry D. Thoreau was nearing death, his friend, Parker Pillsbury, asked him whether he could see anything on the other side. "One world at a time, Parker," said Thoreau. That attitude strikes many people as practical common sense.

Others will be there to whom life already has been so difficult and wearisome that they are not anxious for any further adventuring on the other side of the grave. When they are through living they want to be through. That is not often said in public, but one hears it in secret. A burdensome and disillusioning life might be supposed to issue in desire to try life again under better conditions, but sometimes it issues in utter willingness to finish once for all the whole bewildering business of trying to live anyway. Swinburne caught the mood when he sang:

> From too much love of living,
> From hope and fear set free,
> We thank with brief thanksgiving
> Whatever gods may be
> That no life lives forever;
> That dead men rise up never;

That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Still others will come to church on Easter morning to whom all the symbolism with which hopes of the future life have clothed themselves is so disturbing and even revolting that before service is over they will find it difficult not to sit in the seat of the scornful. Heaven, hell, angels, crowns, thrones, choirs, harps, palms, golden streets, pearly gates—all this poetic imagery, once so meaningful to our fathers, is to them utterly unreal. It is like the Greek mythology in which even our English poets once supposed they had to phrase their thoughts. What poetry outgrew, however, religion still preserves. We still body forth our hopes in mythological terms and, what is worse, our wooden-headed Western literalism has often used this symbolism as though it were fact. Not long ago in New York State, an evangelist went up and down among us saying this: "*Hell has been running for six thousand years.* It is filling up every day. Where is it? About eighteen miles from here. . . . *Which way is it? Straight down*—not over eighteen miles, not less than five miles, down in the

bowels of the earth." Even when the picturesque symbolism of heaven and hell has been used more intelligently than that, to how much glib and superficial certainty have we had to listen from those who, as we knew well, had no more *bona-fide* information than we had about the things which with such exactitude they were describing. The folly of literalism and dogmatism in this realm is colossal, and on Easter morning some will be so scornful of picture-thinking, projected into the future world, that they will miss the main issue altogether.

Others will be there whose difficulties with immortality lie in another realm. They dislike the selfish motives associated with the world to come. Be good that you may win heavenly recompense; avoid evil that you may escape future perdition—such they think is the church's message and the church's central interest in immortality, and not from low motives but from high they revolt against such calculating incentives to right living. Seneca, the Stoic teacher, in one of his parables, pictured a mariner struggling with a storm-tossed boat upon an angry sea and crying, "O Nep-

tune, thou canst save me if thou wilt, or thou canst drown me. But whether or no, I will hold my rudder true!" That seems to many a nobler way to live than working for a heavenly crown. Whatever happens after death, they say, we will steer a straight course now, and you may keep your dreams of a rewarding paradise, if goodness for its own sake seems inadequate.

Still others will be in church on Easter Sunday—those to whom this present life with its opportunities and tasks, its multitude of things to know and do, is so engaging that immortality seems a pallid, far-fetched issue about which they need not much concern themselves. They used to hear that if they should give up faith in immortality they probably would plunge into self-indulgent living, but they no longer think that true. The tasks which invite human effort—knowledge to be gained, inventions to be made, beauties to be enjoyed, evils to be overcome, social reforms to be achieved—seem to them engrossing opportunities, ample to absorb the energies and centralize the purposes of men. Let us give ourselves to human service, they say, not thinking of immortality

of personal life but of immortality of influence, a heritage of good work done to be handed down to our children after us. Many high-minded people feel that. Says a professor in one of our greatest women's colleges, "The modern belief in immortality costs more than it is worth . . . its disappearance from among the most civilized nations would be, on the whole, a gain."

Another class of people is sure to be in church on Easter morning—those who would dearly like to believe in immortality but cannot. They have given hostages to fortune in friends and family who have passed through death into the unknown. They would be happier far if the resounding assurance that death is swallowed up in victory awoke an answering conviction in their minds. But how can they believe that? These swarming millions of humanity on this negligible planet in the sky, each one compounded of physical elements, with his spiritual aspect as much a transient product as is the fragrance of a flower and as such to perish when the unsubstantial fabric shall dissolve—that picture comes between their minds and the triumphant words of creed

and anthem. They feel as one man once wrote me after hearing a sermon on immortality, "How much I wish that I could share your hopes!"

In varying numbers representatives of all these groups are likely to be in our churches on Easter morning, drawn there by family ties, by traditional habit, by a general desire to support the church, by an innate religiousness that while refusing the form desires the substance, or perhaps by a wistful curiosity as to what the preacher will say about the matter this year. And all around these minority groups—with here and there a spiritualist sure of communion with the unseen world—will be the majority: devout believers untroubled by any doubts of life eternal, the bereaved to whom passionate desire for reunion with their dead submerges all other considerations of mind and heart.

II

Such is the picture which presents itself to one who for a time forgets the chancel and remembers the nave. Nor can a thoughtful man regard that picture with the sympathy that it

deserves without wondering what he himself thinks in his secret soul about immortality. Especially, what difference does it make? What is at stake in immortality? That solace, comfort, hopes of happy reunions after death are at stake is obvious. But is that all? Is faith in immortality only another "defense mechanism" by which in hours of bereavement we make life more endurable? What fundamental difference does it make whether man retains his confidence that death does not end all?

Certainly it does make a difference in our thought of ourselves. The deepest, obscurest, most difficult mystery in the universe is not far off among the stars but within ourselves. The relationship between those nine billion brain cells with which we do all our thinking, on the one side, and on the other our personalities, our thoughts, ideals, purposes, loves, and expanding possibilities of character is the most baffling problem in the universe.

At first sight it might seem simple and plausible to hold that the brain cells, as it were, secrete our thought, by subtle organization create what we call ourselves; but how can that be?

Everything physical moves in paths of least resistance. Was it brain cells, obeying that law, which by some fortuitous concatenation produced our higher mathematics or the Ode to a Skylark or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony? Did the cells of the Broca convolution move in paths of least resistance one happy day to such good effect that they produced the Sermon on the Mount?

This merely physical explanation of ourselves becomes the more difficult the farther one goes into it. For suppose some fluoroscope so ingenious that one, looking through it, could observe the brain cells of a man at work. Then suppose that some mirror could make the instrument introspective so that a man could watch his own brain cells at work. It would be a curious experience. *For who would be doing the watching?* It does not seem credible that the brain cells could be cleverly looking at themselves.

Some chemists with a flair for statistics have been analyzing the average man—five feet ten inches tall and weighing one hundred and fifty pounds—and have put into picturesque terms what he is made of: enough fat to make seven

bars of soap, enough iron to make a nail of medium size, enough sugar to fill a shaker, enough lime to whitewash a chicken-coop, enough phosphorus to make twenty-two hundred match tips, enough magnesium for a dose of magnesia, enough potassium to explode a toy cannon, together with a little sulphur. And they say that these chemical elements at current market rates are worth about ninety-eight cents. It is an amazing mystery—our saints, prophets, and martyrs, our Shelleys, Raphaels, Livingstones, and Lincolns, all compounded of ninety-eight cents' worth of chemical material!

The question of immortality, therefore, involves much more than a postponed hope about what is going to happen after death. It vitally concerns what we are now. Do we honestly think that it is an adequate statement of the truth to say that chemical elements, worth some sixty-six cents a hundred-weight, cleverly organized by Nature unaware of what she did, issued in our Isaiahs and Platos, our Galileos and Darwins,—forgive the irreverence,—in Jesus Christ himself? Or do we think something else—that within and reliant on this flesh, as within a scaffolding, personality may be

built as a temple, the abiding spirit within the transitory frame, so that when at last the scaffolding is taken down the permanent consequence shall remain?

However one may answer that, one cannot say that it makes no difference. It makes a tremendous difference. It would make a difference if no question of comfort in the presence of death were involved at all. Many people seem to think that immortality is a future matter. Upon the contrary, it is an imperious assertion about what we are now. We may be merely delicately compounded matter, or it may be true that "now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." Only exceedingly superficial thought could suppose that that does not make a very great difference indeed.

A university student once came to see me with a desperate moral problem on his hands. He had started out feeling free to do as he pleased and he now faced the inevitable nemesis—he was not free to stop. Out of a clear sky came his unexpected ejaculation, "if I could believe in immortality I think that I could see it through." He did not mean that

he wanted the fires of hell to scare him or a heavenly crown to reward him. He meant that if, sitting there, he was simply a chance collocation of chemical elements, it did not seem to him worth while to face the desperate, sacrificial struggle that moral victory would cost. But if he were an abiding spiritual personality—well, what Phidias would not carve more sacrificially at marble than at sandstone?

A man's thought of himself must always make a difference to his life, and immortality is the supreme assertion of abiding spiritual value in man.

III

Belief in immortality makes a difference also in one's thought of the creative process as a whole. Is creation purposeful, working for large ends which when achieved will justify the agony that the process now is costing? A good deal of our modern philosophy dodges that question, goes off on small side paths when that major interrogation comes stalking down the main avenue, even scoffs at those who waste time thinking about it. But by that attitude

modern philosophy only reveals its own mental weariness, too tired of large issues to deal with them longer, and retreating to nearer and more spindling questions, as though the central inquiries concerning human destiny could really be forgotten. They will not be forgotten. Lowell, in The Cathedral, summed up an unescapable experience of man when he spoke of life's apparent futility:

> Fruitless, except we now and then divined
> A mystery of Purpose, gleaming through
> The secular confusions of the world.

To be sure, this universe, so far from looking like a Father's house, as Christianity pictures it, seems rather like a gigantic mechanism ruthlessly crashing on. Well, there are mechanisms that men make which ruthlessly crash on. A railroad system is a mechanism, and to see a great locomotive drag a train out of the Grand Central Station on its steel rails is to see one of the most ruthlessly mechanical procedures which can be imagined, but, for all that, there is purpose in it. That train is going somewhere. Get on it and it will take you to Chicago. So I do not mind this universe re-

sembling, in many of its aspects, a colossal mechanism if it is going somewhere, if only there is a purpose which, achieved, will justify the agony that it has cost.

This idea of purpose in the universe has been, I think, not weakened but helped by the discovery of evolution. How long man has been on this earth we do not know, but he has been here for a long time and he came from lowly origins. We know something about him since the days of the cavemen. We see him winning his fight against the great beasts, the great forests, the great cold. We see him creating tools, framing the miracle of language, learning Nature's laws and mastering her forces, founding governments, and rising to high thoughts of God and immortality. At the climax of this amazing development of human life upon the planet some strange and promising things have eventuated: character at times of such quality and impressiveness that one cannot foresee limits to man's enlarging spiritual life; relationships like parenthood, true love, and friendship, around whose expanding possibilities one cannot put a boundary; creative power to make things useful and beautiful,—great inventions,

great books, great music, noble art—until no horizons can be seen about man's possible creativeness; social hopes, at last, of a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. It does look as though there were an adventure going on upon this planet with something like purpose at the heart of it.

One thing, however, man never has been able to escape—death. That has always been the problem which man faced when he thought of his possibilities. Many people seem to suppose that this problem of death is merely a matter of individual concern and that immortality is only a matter of individual consolation. That is nonsense. Any sensible man would dispense with his personal continuance if on the whole that seemed best. Death is not merely an individual problem; it is a racial problem. Without immortality all our fathers are finally dead, and we shall be finally dead, and our children will be finally dead, until at last, upon a planet that was once uninhabitable and will be uninhabitable again, every human being will be dead—nothing left to conserve the spiritual gains of all this sacrifice upon the earth. I cannot believe that. I cannot believe that this

ascending struggle of humankind is doomed to end in a hopeless cinder heap. And I am sure that it makes a difference what one thinks about this as he tackles the problems of life.

IV

On Easter Sunday morning, therefore, some of us will be in church who do not belong to any of the groups we named at first. We have come through doubt to confidence that this mortal must put on immortality. We cannot credibly explain personality as a transient, accidental effluence of flesh, nor think that this universe at last will be as though mankind had never lived in it at all. We cannot submit to the mental confusion, the triumphant irrationality of existence where death finally is victor over all.

If some one says that we cannot demonstrate immortality, we grant that to start with. "We do not believe immortality," said Martineau, "because we have proved it, but we forever try to prove it because we believe it." That attitude is familiar in science as it is in religion. Some things in science we believe because we

can positively demonstrate them. But toward some others, not capable of complete demonstration, like the universal sway of the conservation of energy or the uniformity of law, we keep pushing out our proof as far as we can reach, because we cannot make sense of the world without believing them. So in religion there are two kinds of truth. The power of prayer to stabilize and strengthen the inward life of man—that can be demonstrated. But immortality is not like that. Unless you accept spiritualism you cannot prove immortality. But from man's first groping endeavors to find meaning in life he has tirelessly tried to prove it because he could not help believing it. Without it human life is ultimately shadowed and undone with a sense of unutterable irrationality and futility. As John Fiske said, "I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."

LIMITATION OR LIBERTY

I

One to whom religion is the breath of life is continually astonished at the ideas about it which occupy some people's minds. I met a man recently who belonged to no church, who had not been inside one for years, and to whom personal religion meant nothing, but who was valiantly supporting the fundamentalists. Since many people were going to have a religion of some kind, he wanted them to have that kind. Religion, so he thought, tended to reduce men to order; it made them docile; it was part of the repressive apparatus of society like policemen and prisons; and, therefore, the more rock-ribbed its authority, the more undisturbed its obscurantism, the more autocratic its organization, the better he liked it.

One way or another, that man is an interesting though extreme example of prevalent ideas about religion. Many people, to be sure, condescendingly regard religion merely as a super-

fluous extra. Around the firm fabric of normal human experience, with its natural joys, tasks, and satisfactions, some, so it is said, desire a decorative fringe—religion. Certain temperaments are supposed to go in for religion. Like collecting stamps or working crossword puzzles, it is a whim which a man can be interested in or not as he pleases. It is "an elective in the university of life."

To others, however, religion means a positive suppression of life. They think of it in terms of limitation and imprisonment, restraint and taboo. And often folk who do not take to it themselves warmly recommend it for others, especially for the populace in general.

It is against the background of such a prevalent conception that the meaning of religion to the spiritual seers shines out. To them religion has been the very opposite of suppressed and shackled living. It has meant life's expansion and completion, with all life's powers and possibilities unfolded and its energies aflame. It has been life's liberator, not its jailer. Its chief effect has been not repression, but release.

II

Whether or not the spiritual seers are right about this is an important inquiry. If religion is really a suppression of life, it is doomed. We may endow it with money, build great institutions to defend it, solidify it in rituals and creeds until it looks as rugged as Gibraltar; but it will not last. It will not last unless it is indispensable to complete living, so that a man cannot be fully man without it.

Years of work in a great city in what might almost be called a Protestant confessional, where all sorts of sins and shames, all degrees of spiritual need have continually presented themselves, make clear the fact that the last thing which folk are looking for when they seek religion is repression. They are always looking for life—its release and liberty and fulfilment. I have before me a letter now from one who eagerly is seeking for religious faith. "If I only had more religion," the letter reads, "the situation would be so much more hopeful." That is no wish to be arrested by a spiritual policeman and put under restraint, but a cry for the inner secret of free and triumphant living.

The deepest elements in human personality are truncated and incomplete until they have expanded into religion. One thing, for example, that all people want, when they seek religion, is happiness. That is indispensable; they cannot go on with the barren existence that lacks it. They have tried to achieve it without religion. They may even have gone consciously into positive irreligion saying that there is no God, that eighty-odd chemical elements with their combinations make up all existence, that there is no spiritual origin behind life nor meaning in it. They have thought of the saints and seers as self-deceived—Wordsworth, feeling the Presence that disturbed him with the joy of elevated thoughts, befooled; even Jesus, saying, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me," victimized by a delusion.

In the end you will often find such folk seeking somewhere for religion. They are not looking for restraint; their irreligious view of life has repressed and depressed them more than they could endure; they are looking for liberty and happiness. For happiness is more than physical comfort, daily work, human com-

panionship, books, music, play; it is incomplete, half-grown, unless it possesses an underlying consciousness that life as a whole "means intensely and means good." It was not a preacher but a psychologist who lately bewailed the multitudes of people who have everything in life except an incentive to live; and no incentive to live is adequate which leaves a man trying to rejoice in life's details while thinking dejectedly of life as a whole. He who is satisfied with the circumference of his experience but has no confidence about its meaning at the center is not fully happy. It was this which caused George John Romanes, the scientist, when for a time he gave up his Christian faith, to compare the hallowed glory of the creed which once was his with the lonely mystery of existence as then he found it; it was this which made him unable to think of his loss without experiencing, as he said, the sharpest pang of which his nature was susceptible.

III

Many other people come to religion because their moral life is cramped without it. This

inalienable part of them, without which they would not be themselves—the inward demand for goodness and the poignant shame of missing it—seems inadequately domiciled in an irreligious world.

Many people, to be sure, try the experiment of serving goodness without caring about religion. They may even consciously say that there is no God, that all creative reality is physical, that the moral sense is a fugitive episode developed on this planet in answer to temporary circumstances, with nothing in creation as a whole corresponding to it or interested in it.

Multitudes of people, however, have not been able to stay that way, because they wanted, not moral restraint, but moral release. When at last they stepped from irreligion to religion, believed in God, believed that man's goodness is a rivulet from an eternal fountain, believed that no lie can last forever, that no man can ultimately tip the beam of the everlasting righteousness, that God is "Powerful Goodness" and will alike forgive and conquer sin, they moved out into a world-view where

their moral sense had room, horizon, and abiding significance.

In this realm, too, religion, whatever else it may be, is not truly described as repressive. It is the moral life of man expanding to a "lordly great compass within," and believing that goodness, which is its priceless and hardly-won treasure, is no accident in this universe, but a revelation of the Eternal.

IV

Many other people come to religion, as every confessor of souls knows, because they have fallen in love. A young man, never outspokenly religious, takes the minister aside on the wedding day and, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, kneels down and asks for prayer; a mother, brilliant, cultured, wealthy, who has surrendered religion, comes to the minister desperately seeking some because she adores her children and sees that they ought to have it—the list is endless. As all the psychologists know, the roots of love and of religion are inextricably intertwined.

Nor is the reason difficult to see. Discount,

if one will, the merely instinctive and emotional causes of this close association, an intellectual reason remains. It is not easy for a great love to think of itself as an accident. We do not say that stars are accidents; there are eternal causes behind them. But here on earth something has developed much more wonderful than stars, something which Henry Drummond rightly called the greatest thing in the world. It is not easy to suppose that this is a fortuitous by-product with nothing corresponding to it at the heart of reality. Love at its highest and finest would feel cooped and handicapped in a loveless creation. Our finest affections and friendships may not have the right to say, but they certainly desire to say, Love is of God.

It is told of one of the great composers that when he was a boy he used to employ the harpsichord to tease his father. After the family had retired for the night he would slip from bed and strike an unfinished chord. Then his father would try in vain to sleep; the unfinished chord haunted him; he had to rise and complete it. So human love at its best, haunt-

ing us with its suggestions, is unfulfilled until it postulates love in the Eternal.

Certainly, religion is no suppression of a life that has known deep friendship; it is the release of such a life into a world fitted to its presence and responsive to its hopes.

V

Some people have this experience of seeking and finding in religion enlargement and release, not primarily for their happiness, their conscience, or their love, but for their mind. Many, to be sure, think of religion as involving, of necessity, the suppression of the free exercise of thought. Who can blame them? Religion hardens into rigid forms. It is identified by its devotees with its historic encrustations. It becomes, not a liberator, but a slave-driver to the mind and justifies by its obscurantisms all that its worst enemies can say about it. But that is not the true genius of religion as the seers have known it. That is the degradation of religion.

Religion at its best is not a cramped cell for the intellect, but a mind-stretcher. Though a

man try to be an agnostic, as Herbert Spencer tried to be, yet he cannot escape the haunting consciousness of the vast vacancy where God ought to be. "Behind these mysteries," wrote Spencer in his Autobiography, "lies the all-embracing mystery—whence this universal transformation which has gone on unceasingly throughout a past eternity and will go on unceasingly throughout a future eternity?" When, now, the mind tries to deal with that all-embracing mystery by which our lives are encompassed, the choices of attitude are few. We can throw up the question and try to forget it. Or we can take the lowest element in our experience, dynamic dirt going it blind, and, lifting that up as far as we can reach, say that the all-embracing mystery is most of all like that. Or we can take the highest that we know—personality at its best, endowed with purposefulness, intelligence, good-will—and, recognizing how pitifully inadequate any human symbol must be when applied to the Eternal, can say, The all-embracing mystery is most of all like that.

That is the daring outreach and intellectual

adventure of religion. It is the mind rising up to think of the Eternal in the noblest terms at its disposal.

So we could continue down the list of those constituent elements which make men what they are and continually drive them to religion —happiness, conscience, love, mind, hope, purpose, ideal. In every case we should discover that religion is a flowering out of these into their expanded meanings. Take any one of these best elements in life and let it unfold its widest implications, and inevitably one has reached religion. Samuel Johnson once said, "No one can think deeply without thinking religiously." That can be carried farther—no one can live deeply without living religiously. Religion is not the truncation of life, but life's completion.

VI

To be sure, that fact by itself does not prove religion's truth. Some, with what seems to them a crushing answer, will be ready to meet the facts which we have been presenting. They will say:

To be sure, religion is the completion of life. It would be a privilege, the supreme privilege, if you will, to give the reins to one's ideal desires, to rejoice in a world right at its creative center because that makes us happy, to see in goodness a revelation of God, to interpret our love as a reflection of his, and so to think of the Eternal in terms of the highest that we know. It would be exhilarating to feel our lives so caught up and glorified in the unifying purpose of a morally significant universe, and to believe that mankind will garner at last the harvests for which its saints have toiled. But just because it would be exhilarating we are not going to believe it. We are not going to be credulous.

I, too, am afraid of being credulous. The fear of credulity, however, does not lead me away from religion, but toward it. That is one reason for being a religious man. When I hear any one reducing the interpretation of the whole creative process to the fortuitous interactions of a few chemical elements I am sure that that man is credulous. He has been taken in by a superficial view of things.

One easily can get hold of this fear of credulity by the wrong handle, and many in history have done so. Some of the best minds of the race would not believe that there were people

on the other side of the globe walking with their feet up and their heads down. They were not going to be fools. No such credulity for them! They would not even believe that the earth was round, because it looked flat, or moving, because it seemed stationary. They were devoted to their canny common sense. They would not surrender *that* to think that blood circulates, that steamships can cross the sea, that gravitation is true, that democracy can be made to work. Our whole modern view of the world has been built up against the scornful antagonism of able minds that were dead set against credulity. For while the fear of credulity is a necessary guardian against falsehood and superstition, it has, on the other side, prevented multitudes from believing some of the greatest truths which later generations gloried in. Always the universe has proved more marvelous than the incredulous have dared to think.

When, therefore, the modern materialist arrives, reduces the qualitative aspect of man's life to the quantitative and then analyzes the quantitative into molecules, atoms, electrons, presenting us at last with a formula in physics

as the sufficient explanation of everything, I am sure that man is credulous. If he says, The formula is simple, I reply, Too simple! Our life and the creation that enshrines it are too deep and varied, too mysterious and meaningful, too filled with spiritual potencies to be reduced to a formula like that. I will not surrender to that kind of credulity.

Incredulity works in two ways. It can guard men from the gullible acceptance of folly, or it can keep men from belief in amazing truth. For myself, on what seems to me the good evidence of man's spiritual evolution up to date, I am confident that this world in the end will prove far more spiritually significant, not less, than we have dared to think. At any rate, only the caricatures of religion are suppressions of life. Real religion is the secret of life fulfilled and abundant.

TOLERANCE

I

Anybody who has gotten near enough to the churches during the last few years to know with what wild and whirling words many of the followers of Jesus have been assailing one another must wonder about the present estate of tolerance among us. "Toleration in Religion—the Best Fruit of the Last Four Centuries" was one of the inscriptions chosen by President Eliot, a generation ago, for the court of honor at a world's fair. If by toleration one means that folk are no longer whipped through the streets of Boston for being Baptists or deprived of their ears because they are Quakers, we obviously have made some progress. But if by toleration one means the fine grace of tolerance, with its love of free field and fair play for divergent ideas, with its delight in independent diversities of opinion and its open-minded endeavor to understand and appreciate them, with its willingness to include in fellowship and work folk of good-will who

exhibit many varieties of mind, then toleration is at a low ebb in America.

Some of this recrudescence of intolerance, against which even the President of the United States has publicly protested, may reasonably be ascribed to war's psychological effect. Tolerance of independent opinion is no virtue in war. From the day that hostilities are declared, truth, for its own sake, is at a discount, and the standardization and massing of public opinion so that everybody will think one thing is as important as guns and ships. To that end, by fair means or foul, propaganda unifies the nation's mind, and every one who dares to differ is treated as a pariah. That was done in all the nations during the Great War, and it is not easy to sober up from so prolonged and so complete a debauch of intolerance.

There is more to be said about the matter, however, than this familiar, omnibus ascription of all our ills to the late conflict. Intolerance has a long history and it bids fair to have a prosperous future. Too many interests in human life are served by it to make it easy to outgrow. By intolerance of other people and their opinions men protect in comfort their

sense of their own unique superiority; they save themselves from open-mindedness and from the consequent, painful necessity of changing their ways of thought and life; they defend their racial, religious, or class prejudices, which to them are sweeter than the honeycomb; they confirm their right to force their views as dogmatically as they are able on other folk; they achieve gangway for their pent pugnacity and, like the fabled Irishman, can freely ask about every fight in which their views are concerned, whether it is private or whether anybody can get in. Intolerance is an agreeable vice to its possessor. Moreover, it produces some powerful consequences. It was Martin Luther who said, "He who does not believe my doctrine is sure to be damned."

Obviously, therefore, the proper way to begin a discussion of tolerance is by being tolerant of intolerance and trying to discover what good there may be in it. That it has driving power, supplies to its possessor persistence, obstinacy, doggedness and fortitude is clear. Intolerant folk who have believed so singly in their own opinions that they have hated all others and have thought the holders of them

damned have done some of the most momentous business ever prosecuted on this planet and, in comparison with them, the mild expositors of tolerance, willing to lend an ear to every opinion under heaven, have often seemed feebly to lack moral sinews and thighs. There is virtue as well as vice in narrowness. Men looked broadly at the heaven for many centuries without seeing what was going on there; it was only when they peered through the restricted slit of a telescopic lens that they saw what was afoot in the sky. So a certain exclusive, highly specialized, intolerant narrowness has characterized some of the greatest pioneers in thought and achievement. They were not, in any ordinary sense, open-minded. They were terrific believers in some one thing which they saw clearly, and they often labored under the impression that any one who did not share their thought deserved perdition.

Tolerance would better beware, therefore, lest in calling itself a virtue and lording it over its opposite vice, it slip to a lower level even than intolerance and become feeble indifferentism. There is more hope in the Athanasian Creed, with its damnatory clauses against all

who disagree, than in the futile sophism of neutrals to whom all ideas look alike. A distinguished visitor at the Mosque el Azhar in Cairo, headquarters of the most influential university of orthodox Islam, is said to have inquired concerning the cosmology taught there, whether they held that the earth went about the sun or that the sun went about the earth. "Your Excellency," said the obliging and amiable Moslem, "on that point we are entirely liberal—we teach both."

Granted, however, that a man does have convictions, is inwardly and earnestly committed to ideas on whose truth he banks and causes for whose success he is sacrificially concerned, what shall be said about the amazing intolerance which to-day is exhibited in almost every area of American life?—the Ku Klux Klan hatred of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Negroes, the frequent and startling invasions of our constitutional guarantees of free speech, the itch for a standardized mental type, the earnest endeavor by law to impose upon everybody the moral customs of a group, the attempt to exclude evolution from the mental horizon of whole states, by forbidding its teach-

ing in the public schools, the fundamentalist passion to enforce orthodox unanimity in the churches—in a word, this general and widespread distaste for intellectual individuality and independence, and this eager desire to make up other people's minds for them. That this is one of the most remarkable phenomena of our time must be clear. It presents a serious problem to all educational agencies working for a virile national life, and, in particular, a crucial problem to religion.

II

The temptation of religion to be intolerant is very strong, as all its history shows. In primitive days the welfare of the whole tribe was thought to depend on the favor of the gods, so that any religious irregularity on the part of an individual, which might displease the gods, imperiled the entire group. Tolerance, under such circumstances, meant social ruin. The unruly individual must be stamped out. To take him out and stone him was the entirely logical penalty in the brave days of the Old Testament, when anybody displayed careless

disregard of tribal custom or dangerous originality in religion.

From that day to this, religion has always had a hankering for uniformity and a deadly dislike for variety and difference. Considering the ideas of religion that have prevailed, this is natural. If religious truth is an inerrant, supernatural revelation, if some book has been written in heaven or verbally inspired on earth, or if a church has been gifted with infallibility, then, of course, variety of opinion is synonymous with betrayal of the faith, and heresy and falsehood are the same thing. Under such circumstances the extirpation of heretics, by persuasion if possible, by force if necessary, can be made to seem a sacred duty. Any toleration of divergent opinions in religion, which being divergent must be false, and, being false, must destroy the souls of men, would be impiety. Indeed, under such a theory, the only true mercy to the community as a whole is to be merciless to heretics—more ruinous monsters by far than those who merely slay the body. In consequence, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike have exhausted the possibilities of mental duress and physical tor-

ture in compelling religious unanimity and, long after these American shores were colonized, men of our kind thought the whole idea of toleration in religion an invention of the devil.

We need not suppose, then, that having recently progressed to the point where old expressions of intolerance, the dungeon and the flaming stake, no longer are allowed, we thereby have left behind the thing itself or soon are likely to. Plenty of people still hold a theory of infallible authority in religion, think that they and their kind alone know what the infallible authority is and what it means, are sure that all others are beyond the pale of salvation and that their influence is endangering human souls. Plenty of people, therefore, are in a state of mind to think that tolerance of religious divergence is sin and that almost anything, allowed by the police, which will blacken the reputation and destroy the influence of another type of religion is a holy weapon to defend the faith. Even when so thoroughgoing a theory does not have its logical effect, an earnest man's religion is so precious to him, doubt of its unique and absolute truth is so

unbearable, allowance of equal privileges to competitors and rivals is so difficult, that we may expect to have intolerant religion among us for a long time to come.

III

Nevertheless, the number of those to whom religious intolerance seems a barbarous survival is on the increase. The ascendency of this new way of thinking will mark an unprecedented era in mankind's religious life, and the basic ideas which underlie the position of this school of tolerance are at least worth the stating.

For one thing, intolerance to-day is frequently not a sign of strong, but of weak faith. It is the man who is sure of his wife who is free from jealousy, and it is the man who is certain of his truth who can afford to be courteous to rival opinions. Said Milton in his Areopagitica, "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth

put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?" From that day to this, trust in truth to win its own way, if given a fair statement and a free field, has become more and more a mark of the great believers. He who thinks that his gospel needs to be bolstered up by artificial enforcements, by heresy trials and excommunications, by personal discourtesy and defamation, does not really believe in the validity and power of his gospel. His reliance on the extraneous instruments of intolerance is a betrayal of his own unstable faith.

That this trust in truth, given a fair field, to make its unforced way, is not impractical idealism, the whole method of modern science makes clear. The typical scientist looks on intolerance as intellectual sin. Open-mindedness, mental hospitality to fresh ideas, careful consideration of opposing views, willingness to keep fellowship in the same university or even in the same laboratory with those who differ—such attitudes are the scientist's *bushido,* his code of honor and his pride. Science relies on no exclusive and final creeds, no heresy trials nor excommunications to settle differences of

opinion. Bad blood enough, to be sure, exists between scientists, because they are human, but it is taken for the ill temper that it is and not for a holy method of defending truth. Here at least in one realm, and that the most influential in the modern world, the methods of intolerance have been in theory and to a surprising degree in practice eliminated.

But who, in consequence, would accuse scientists of having no convictions, of being feeble indifferentists and mental neutrals? As all the world knows, they are tremendous believers, whose assurance about the great outlines of truth evidentially arrived at is vigorous and creative, and who express themselves with decision and candor. Intolerance as a method of bolstering up science has been largely dispensed with, not because of invading dubiousness and indifference, but because of increasing confidence and faith.

When will the churches learn that intolerance, whether personal or ecclesiastical, is an evidence of weakness? The confident can afford to be calm and kindly; only the fearful must defame and exclude.

IV

In the second place, intolerance to-day, in spite of the dogmatic vigor it sometimes imparts to its possessors, is ineffective. It does nothing but damage to the cause it seeks to defend. Like Saul, the intolerant man or church falls on his own sword. Attack a heretic and you give him an audience. Condemn a book and everybody reads it. Stamp on the spark of an innovation and you spread the flame. Let an ecclesiastical body assail an idea and, if there is any truth in the idea, no professional propagandist could advertise it half so well. Let a state pass a law forbidding the teaching of evolution, and the universities report multiplied numbers of students studying biology, and more books on evolution are published and sold than ever before in the nation's history. All the apparent victories of intolerance to-day are Pyrrhic. No stranger spectacle for irony to look on is easily imaginable than our persistence in using the attitudes and methods of intolerance long after they have become suicidal to the user.

This inefficiency of intolerance, moreover,

runs much deeper than its practical incompetence to kill an idea. The churches are supposed to be presenting Christ. If they are not, they would better be for he is their supreme asset. But how can the churches present him controversially, commend him by pugnacity, make him who was "full of grace and truth" acceptable by dogmatic intolerance?

Wars have been waged for the glory of Christ, crusades have been bloodily forced through to victorious conclusions for his sake, persecutions have been mercilessly carried on to further his cause. Did any such methods ever do anything except obscure the real Christ in Stygian night and plunge the world fathoms deeper into Christlessness? And is it not plain that now, when we keep the same spirit and merely modify the weapons of our intolerance, we still are doing nothing for Christ and everything against him? We cannot commend the highest spiritual beauty and truth by the use of intolerant moods and bad tempers. We cannot exalt love by encouraging hate.

Tolerance is not a weak thing; it is the unconquerable ascendency of personal good-will over all differences of opinion. If that is not

Christian, I do not know where to find Christianity. And what is more, it works. It is the principle of persuasion without which, in the long run, nothing else will work at all.

V

In the third place, intolerance involves a false and ruinous idea of the church. It presupposes that a church should be a group of people holding the same opinions in religion. That idea is so deep-seated in most Christians that it will take many a year to dislodge it. Get a pet idea in religion, desire ardently to make every one else agree, feel intolerant unwillingness to work with those who refuse to agree, organize a group of people like-minded with yourself to propagate your idea, exclude all others, and set out to make up other people's minds for them as fast as possible—that has been the almost universal prescription for a church in Christendom.

The consequence is that to-day nearly two hundred different kinds of Christians are organized in the United States to present their specialties, and the American people, as a

whole, however much for tradition's and respectability's sake they may 'join the church,' are so little impressed by all these small dogmatisms and infallibilities that, as the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church fearfully noticed in their last pastoral, a large proportion of the children of this Christian nation are "growing up without religious influence, or religious teaching, of any sort."

The mistake involved in this suicidal procedure lies deep—the whole idea of the church is wrong. Uniformity of mind, which intolerance is always seeking, we cannot get; we should not want to get it. In union there is strength, but not in unanimity—there is death in that. All life, movement, vigor, progress spring from independence and variety. The church of the future can never be one of these unanimous sects, but rather a comprehensive communion, including in its fellowship, around the organizing center of a common devotion and a common purpose, the greatest possible variety of temperament and diversity of mind. When we have done our best in this direction we doubtless shall find still divergences of opinion so wide as to disrupt community of

purpose and so make impossible co-operation in the same church. There still will be different organizations to express religion as there are different schools of philanthropy and medicine. But there will not be nearly two hundred Christian varieties of them in America. Until tolerant inclusiveness takes the place of intolerant exclusiveness in the ideals of the denominations, there is little hope for the denominations at all. The church of the future will be the one that succeeds in being the most comprehensive.

VI

Intolerance, therefore, is one of the great failures of history. It turns out at last to be an evidence of weak conviction, a suicidal method of propaganda, a destroyer of the churches by endless schism.

Let no one evade this truth on the ground that obviously there are some people altogether intolerable. Of course there are—murderers, and the state must give them short shrift; shysters, and law associations should have them disbarred; quacks, and the medical profession

should show them up; hypocrites, making moral mockery of their Christian ministry, and the church should drive them out. In dealing with men of social ill-will no one in his senses would plead for benevolent neutrality. The uses of righteous indignation are manifold. In this paper, however, we have been thinking of men of good-will, sharing a common purpose and devotion, deeply concerned to further the interests of religion in the world but widely differing in their opinions, and, in that realm, the long and short of the matter is that intolerance has no contribution to offer. Even between Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Mohammedans it has no contribution to offer. It can shed no light on the questions at issue. It brings nothing to a good end, but degenerates by inevitable stages into bitterness and blackguardism. As for its effects within Christianity, they are fatal. When will the churches, as a whole, find this out? When will Christ receive an adequate presentation to the world through a fraternal fellowship of various folk who in learning to be Christians have also learned to be gentlemen?

WHAT CHRISTIAN LIBERALS ARE DRIVING AT

I

The subject is difficult to write about because religious liberalism is so often vague and nebulous. Misty in outline, constantly in process of alteration, liberalism bewilders many to-day who would like to understand it. The public barometers indicate that a change in the religious weather is coming on; the newspapers are full of theological controversies; such names as fundamentalist, liberal, modernist, are freely applied; but just what it is all about is often difficult for a plain man to find out.

Certainly, I cannot claim the right to speak for all Christian liberals. There are too many different sorts of them, from swashbuckling radicals, believing not much of anything, to men of well-stabilized convictions who are tolerant of differences and open-minded to new truth. But there is a large and growing group in our churches for whom I shall try to speak.

Let me propose at the start three tests by which the kind of liberal whom I shall endeavor to represent can be recognized. First, he has come into his new attitudes and ways of thinking, not simply as a matter of intellectual adventure, but through the deepening of his spiritual life. He is a liberal because he is more religious, not because he is less. His growing soul, cramped in old restraints, has struck out for air to breathe.

Some of us began our religious life under the domination of ideas about the Bible, God, Christ, heaven, and hell, that were current half a century ago. Then our minds grew up to be citizens of the twentieth century. Our experience with prayer, forgiveness, faith, and spiritual renewal deepened and enlarged. We had to dispense with a smaller mental formulation and get a larger one to save our souls. They would have smothered if they could not have broken through into freer air.

It was vitality of religious life that made Paul a liberal, freeing him from the old restraints of Jewish theology and legalism. It was vitality of religious life that made Luther a liberal, striking out for liberty that his soul

might live. Such is the genesis of the best liberalism of to-day; it springs not from the diminution of Christian life, but from the expansion of it.

Some liberalism is not of this sort. It is negative, agnostic, destructive. It springs from superficial curiosity that goes novelty seeking for its own sake. It exhibits itself in people like one who recently came to see me: she had started by being a Methodist, had then become a Christian Scientist, had gone from there to Theosophy, had afterward become a Spiritualist, and at last accounts had no idea what she was. It spends its time, like the Athenians, "in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing," and it is notable that "tell" comes first and "hear" second. Such liberalism leads to shallowness, not depth, to endless questions with no answers to them, to the building of altars "To an Unknown God."

There was once an insane woman in an asylum who could be kept quiet only by hearing something tear. They used to give her pieces of old silk and she would sit by the hour con-

tentedly pulling them to pieces and listening to them rip. Some liberals are like that.

But very few whom I know are of that totem. Most of them have surrendered smaller ideas and gotten larger ones to give their souls room. The new wine would not stay in the old wine-skins. Like Beethoven, discontented with prevalent musical forms and seeking new ones because he had more music in him than the old forms were adequate to convey, so they have been pushed out into their liberalism by the expansive power of their developing religious life. At any rate, I am sure that no other kind of progressiveness in religion has an abiding contribution to make to Christianity.

A second test of this liberal whom I am trying to represent is emphasis on positive convictions rather than on negative denials. Some liberals make negations their chief stock in trade. Whenever they have a chance they produce a long list of things which they no longer can believe.

How many things, for example, they disbelieve about prayer. They roll under their tongues a story from Pittsburgh: a fire broke out; a woman saw it sweeping up the block in

her direction; she prayed; the wind changed; the fire burned down the other way and destroyed some other people's houses instead of hers. They do not believe that prayer has any such effect. In this world of impartial law, they do not think that God so plays favorites and, like a celestial charity organization society, doles out small gifts upon request to improvident applicants. Neither do I.

But when I observe an attitude toward prayer which mainly concerns itself with ideas discredited and disbelieved, I am impatient. What *do* we believe about prayer? "He who rises from his knees a better man, his prayer is answered." Do we know what that means? In the too great rush of our turbulent life, do we know the secret of praying which enables us to get a new grip on ourselves, to see a new perspective around our work, to let the healing influence of the Spirit restore our souls? Are we experiencing those victories of faith over ourselves and our circumstances which always are the accompaniment of a vital and praying religion? What we do not believe about prayer probably gets us nowhere; what we do positively believe may get us a long way.

In every aspect of religion this principle holds true. We cannot live upon negations and denials. Life is too complex, too hazardous, too full of mystery; sorrows go too deep; temptations assail too furiously; and the future is too uncertain. We live only on the basis of our convictions, and from religious teachers in particular we need above all else to hear what positively they do believe.

When, therefore, I think of an effective and useful liberal I think of a man like George MacDonald. Some of us know him by his poems, others by his sermons, more by his novels, such as Robert Falconer. He was a Congregational minister in a small parish in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, presenting Christianity in modern terms. One day his deacons came to him to report that it was impossible for them to continue his salary, and that in consequence he would have to go. He innocently offered to remain and support himself by writing and teaching. His wife, however, soon had a woman's intuition. "George," she said, "it isn't that the people here are too poor to pay us. They don't want us."

So George MacDonald was crowded out of his first and only pastorate, went to Manchester and then to London, preached in a hall, and became a great inspiration to multitudes of Christians. William Burnet Wright tells of one Sunday service which he attended. MacDonald read the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the heroes of faith and began his sermon with a broad Scotch accent: "We have heard of these men of feyth. I am not going to tell you what feyth is—there are plenty of clergymen to do that. I am going to try to help you to believe." Then for an hour and a quarter he poured out his soul on that spellbound congregation until none could have left the hall without being sure that there are great aims to live for, great convictions to live by, great faiths undergirding life, and great hopes ahead.

That is the liberalism that counts.

One more test of the effective Christian liberal remains: he is sacrificially in earnest about establishing God's will in the earth. Some liberalism does not move in that realm at all. It is an intellectual excursion without moral consecration. It is a set of up-to-date opinions

in theology which can be held and defended as a smart pose. There are dilettanti in religion, as elsewhere, who are very modern but not very much in earnest. The necessary business of reforming Christianity, however, to which liberalism has set itself, is too serious for any dilettante attitude to effect. Christianity certainly does need to be reformed. Some, indeed, still think of it as a finished system, its doctrines all defined, its rubrics all elaborated, its duties all laid down—a completed system needing nothing but to be accepted. I do not see how they do it. The Gospel came, an ideal message, into an unideal world and, as in Shakspere's figure, like the dyer's hand it has been subdued to the stuff it worked in.

Of course Christianity needs to be reformed. Nearly one-third the population of the globe is nominally Christian. What if they were really Christian? Some forty-six million people in the United States are nominally Christian. What if their Christianity were vital, intelligent, effective? There is no cause on earth for which one who cares about the future of mankind could better pray and work than for the reformation of Christianity, and it is this

that the liberals are driving at. But it can be achieved by no mere holding of up-to-date opinions. It is going to take spiritual insight, sacrificial patience, constructive statesmanship to recover the essential principles of Jesus, make them dominant in the church and in the world. The progressive in religion may well test himself at this point. Every day in every way he may be getting liberaler and liberaler; but that will not matter much if, with his new opinions, he is not being made into a more devoted, efficient, constructive builder of a Christian civilization.

These, I think, are the three tests of effective Christian liberalism: it springs from the expansion and deepening of the spiritual life; it dwells in the great centers of affirmation, not of denial; and it issues in constructive statesmanship for the Kingdom.

II

The representatives of such liberalism are multiplying in the churches. The uproar of the last few years associated with fundamentalism has been caused in part by the clear and

true perception of the reactionaries that the liberals are gaining and that, if not stopped now, they will soon be in control. What the liberals are driving at, therefore, is an important matter, not only to the churches, but also to the public in general. Let me try to group their major aims and motives under two heads.

For one thing, liberals undoubtedly wish to modernize Christianity's expression of its faith. The Protestant Reformation was a valiant stroke for liberty, but it occurred before the most characteristic ideas of our modern age had arrived. The Augsburg Confession is a memorable document, but the Lutherans who framed it did not even know that they were living on a moving planet, and Martin Luther himself called Copernicus a new astrologer. The Westminster Confession is a notable achievement in the development of Christian thought, but it was written forty years before Newton published his work on the law of gravitation. Protestantism, that is, was formulated in prescientific days. Not one of its historic statements of faith takes into account any of the masterful ideas which constitute the framework of modern thinking—the inductive

method, the new astronomy, natural law, evolution. All these have come since Protestantism arrived. Protestantism stiffened into its classic forms under intellectual influences long antedating our modern world, and the chaos and turmoil in Christian thought to-day are the consequences. They spring directly from the impossible endeavor of large sections of the church to continue the presentation of the Gospel in forms of thought that are no longer real and cogent to well-instructed minds.

If this problem were merely an intellectual matter the liberals would not be so much in earnest about it. What makes it pressing and unescapable is its vital import; it is a matter of life and death to the faith of increasing multitudes of people.

Perilous heresy to welcome modern ways of thinking in religion? The shoe is on the other foot. Our children are going to schools and colleges where scientific methods of thinking are taken for granted, where they underlie all studies and are involved in all results; and the most ruinous blow that can be struck against the faith of our youth is to make them choose between scientific thinking and the Gospel.

The colleges are often blamed for upsetting the religious security of our young men and women. Any one who knows the colleges will not be tempted to relieve them altogether from the burden of that charge. But as one deals with young men and women religiously upset, one must often blame their unsettlement not so much upon the colleges as upon Christian churches and Sunday schools—upon religious agencies which taught these young people in the beginning that the Christian Gospel is indissolubly associated with the prescientific view of the world in the Scriptures or the creeds; that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus is dependent upon fiat creation or the historic credibility of old miracle narratives; that the God of the Gospel, like the God of the early Hebrew documents, is a magnified man who could walk in the garden in the cool of the day or come down from the sky to confound men's speech lest they should build a tower high enough to reach his home.

It is a tragic error thus to set up in the minds of young children an artificial adhesion between the Gospel and a literal interpretation of Scripture and creed, so that, when educa-

tion inevitably opens a child's mind, the whole unnatural combination of literalism and spiritual faith collapses, and Christ is banished from a soul because he has been associated with opinions that are bound in the end to prove untenable. No more sacred obligation rests upon ministers, teachers, fathers and mothers in this generation than to give children from the first a type of Christianity that will not have to be unlearned. In this regard we are willing in the end that liberalism shall be tested by its fruits.

To be sure, the process of rethinking the mental setting of our faith in terms that will take into account our new science, our new methods of historical study, our new acquaintance with other religions, does have disturbing aspects. The mind always walks as uneasily in new ideas as the feet in new shoes. The Protestant Reformation was disturbing. Questions then were raised about the church and pushed to radical conclusions. But this awakened spirit of free inquiry could not stop with the church; it inevitably went on to the Bible. Nothing which can be thought about is too sacred to be investigated by thought. Upon

the Bible, therefore, every discoverable light from history, new documents, archeology, textual criticism, comparative religion, is being fearlessly thrown.

This does mean a reinterpretation of Scripture that is disturbing to many people. It does mean readjustment in the church's approach to the Bible and use of it. But the liberal is persuaded of two things: first, that "The man who refuses to face facts doesn't believe in God," as Marcus Dod, the stalwart Scotch Presbyterian said; and second, that the Bible, seen in the new light, is in the end a more vital, useful and inspiring book than it was under the old régime. For while thought-forms do change, whether in the first century, the sixteenth, or the twentieth, the abiding experiences of the soul do not change, and the Bible supremely springs from and ministers to that permanent realm of spiritual life.

Many popular pictures of liberalism, therefore, are sheer caricatures. Liberalism is not primarily a set of opinions; it is a spirit of free inquiry which wishes to face the new facts, accept whatever is true, and state the abiding principles of Christian faith in cogent and con-

temporary terms. Liberals differ about innumerable details. Some believe in the virgin birth and some do not; some would state the atonement one way and some another. But their agreement is deep and essential; they believe in the central affirmations of Christianity, the living God, the divine Christ, the indwelling Spirit, forgiveness, spiritual renewal, the coming victory of righteousness on earth, the life everlasting. Such abiding convictions of Christian faith they count so precious that they are desperately concerned lest the modern age should lose them, and they are sure that the modern age will lose them unless we are able to state them in terms of thought which modern minds can use.

Liberalism is not a negative movement; it is a positive campaign to maintain vital religion in the face of materialistic and paganizing influences of our time. Instead, however, of barricading ourselves in the citadel of prescientific theology, we are convinced that the only way to victory is to take the field. If we are to persuade this younger generation, we must meet materialistic philosophy on its own ground, fight it with its own intellectual weap-

ons, beat it at its own game. We must make Christianity intelligible to people of the twentieth century, as our Protestant forefathers made their Christianity intelligible to people of the sixteenth century. Were Luther, Calvin, John Knox here now, that is precisely what they would be doing. It seems to us alike absurd and perilous to insist that religion alone, among vital human interests, cannot rephrase itself in new ways of thought.

III

The second liberal aim is to put first things first in religion, to subordinate the details of ritual, creed, and church to the major objects of Christianity—the creation of personal character and social righteousness. At the very center of liberalism, as I understand it, is the conviction that nothing fundamentally matters in religion except those things which create private and public goodness. The reason why most of our theological controversies are idle beating of the air is that whichever side wins makes no difference to character. In historic and contemporary Christianity three elements

have been continually used as competitors of character in the interest of Christians. They have repeatedly usurped the place which private and public righteousness ought to occupy as the one supreme matter with which Christianity is concerned and for which it works. These three elements are ritual, doctrine, and church.

This does not mean that ritual is unnecessary or unimportant in religion. We have ritual in courtesy when the hand is extended or the hat lifted; in love when the endearing name is used or the kiss bestowed; in law, without which the procedure of the courts would be impossible; in business, as any one will soon discover who tries to display conspicuous originality in making out a check. Of course, religion always has had its ceremonies and always will. Ritual is a kind of shorthand by which we say things that we do not take time to put into words or could not if we would. Its symbols body forth unutterable aspirations, gratitudes, devotions. Religion must have not only goodness and truth, but beauty. Nevertheless, a peril lurks in all ritualism—the supposition, namely, that the Lord God of this infinite universe cares

anything about our meticulous performance of a ceremony, if it does not issue in private and public righteousness.

Nor does the liberal Christian belittle doctrine. The ordered and intelligible statement of the convictions which undergird Christian living is important. A man's creed, if real and vital, is his conviction about the nature and meaning of his life, of the world in which it is lived, and of the God who rules it. That certainly is basic and controlling.

Centuries ago, could we have looked down on Europe, we should have seen the ships of even courageous mariners hugging the shore. Across the tossing waters to the west they looked with dread and, from port to port, close to the coast, they beat their way. They had in their minds a picture of the world as flat. To be sure, the earth was actually round, but the picture in their minds negatived the reality. That way of thinking was their creed and there was no hope of adventurous voyaging until a new creed came, a larger and truer mental picture of the globe on which they lived.

So always a real creed, a controlling vision of what this earth is and what life means, which

occupies the imagination and affects the life, is enormously important. If by doctrine one means this vital and influential outlook on life, then I should say that just now the need of the church is not for less doctrine but for more—more clear-cut, luminous, intelligible teaching about God, Christ, the Scriptures, the soul, the meaning of life, and immortality.

Only, there is an omnipresent danger in emphasis on doctrine. Doctrine in time is petrified into dogma. It is officially formulated. Then there is an ecclesiastical type of mind ready to use it, no longer as an inspiring elucidation of the convictions by which men really live, but as a mold into which men's thinking must be exactly run. Doctrine is then authoritative, a definition laid down in times past of the way in which men must always think. And men often pride themselves on this repetition of their fathers' thoughts, as though the God and Father of Jesus cared anything for that, except as it represents real convictions vitally issuing in private and public righteousness.

Furthermore, the liberal certainly does not undervalue the church. If instead of writing

an essay I were talking to a rebellious youth, I should be defending the church. I should say:

You are in revolt. You hate the church's narrowness, its blindness to the great issues of our day, its wrangling over things that do not matter, its sectarianisms and its obscurantisms. Do you think that you have more cause to be disgusted with the church than I have? I know more than you do about her faults and foibles, because I live with her all the time. Like a lawyer who knows better than the layman does the futile red tape and self-defeating technicalities of law courts and yet for all that believes in courts of law, so do I know the faults and follies of organized religion, but I believe in the church.

Leave for a moment those aspects of the church's life that just now are continually flaunted in the papers, and for the sake of fairness think of those unpublished things which the church is always doing. In the darkest places on this planet, where else humanity would be helpless and sodden, you will find hospitals and schools and spiritual agencies. They are put there by the church. No other organization has thought of such service in those desperate corners of the earth except the church, and the men and women who sacrificially are serving there are the church's gift. Show me an organization that can reduplicate our Careys and

Morrisons and Adoniram Judsons and General Booths, their compeers and successors, who have gone where life is darkest, where need is deepest, where work is hardest, before you ask me to give up the church.

Do you want a man to sink his life in an Indian tribe or in the slums of New York, to run a hospital under the Arctic Circle in Alaska, or a school in the jungles of Africa? Do you want a man to do that who has had bestowed on him all that modern civilization can bestow—high heritage, culture, education? Do you want him to do it without hope of earthly reward, no money except bare subsistence, no comfort except what he can gain from an alien and inhospitable situation? Where will you look for that man? You will look to the church.

The noblest men and women I have ever known, the men and women that I should most choose to be like, have had their roots in the church. And the loveliest homes I ever have been in, homes that were bits of paradise on earth, one way or another have had upon them the influence of the church. Moreover, when my children grow up I want the church around them. I wish that it were better than it is but, even so, I want the church around my children.

So, against flippant contempt, one liberal at least would defend the church.

Nevertheless, the pathos of Christian history lies in the way the church has so often mis-

represented and obstructed vital Christianity. Our multiplied and meaningless denominations are doing that to-day. In one of our American communities a congregation called itself The Church of God. They could not agree among themselves and, having split asunder, the split called itself, The True Church of God. They in turn divided and the new division called itself The Only True Church of God. The tragedy of that picturesque situation, too typical of our modern Protestantism to be pleasant, is that none of these divisions has any imaginable relationship with the one supreme business of religion: the creation of private and public righteousness.

This sort of thing is bad enough in America. It is a matter for tears in the missionary field. In spite of all the fine co-operations that have actually been wrought out, disheartening exhibitions of denominationalism still stare at a visitor in missionary lands. To see our Western sectarianism promulgated in the Far East is to witness one of the most tragic misapplications of consecrated energy that history records. As one of the missionary secretaries

exclaimed, "Think of seeing an American Dutch Reformed Chinese!"

A liberal, therefore, in his emphasis is utterly careless of sectarian distinctions. He is by conviction and ideal an interdenominationalist. He deplores our divided Protestantism as a sin against God and against man. He sees that our denominational peculiarities for the most part are caused by historic reasons only, have no contemporary excuse for existence, and have no contribution to make to righteousness. He is convinced that nothing matters in any church except those few vital and transforming faiths and principles of the Gospel, common to all churches, which do create personal character and social progress.

IV

To put the matter in another way, the liberal sees that much of so-called Christianity to-day is deflecting the attention of people from the real problems of the generation. The reason for this is obvious. Religion makes sacred everything that it touches, great and small, from the priest's heart to the pomegranates on

the fringes of his robe. Tithing mint, anise, and cummin is made sacred by religion, as Jesus found—so sacred that attention can be directed there until the "weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith," are neglected. That has always been the danger of organized religion. It is the danger to-day.

The hardest thing for me personally to stand in the recent religious controversy has been its effect on many of our best youth. Some, to be sure, have enjoyed the spectacle, because it has been a fight. Others have been more seriously concerned with it, because they have seen that their hope of maintaining allegiance to the Christian church depends upon winning a victory for the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free. But there is still another attitude among our best youth. It is as though they said:

We have only one life to live. It looks to us as though it were going to be lived in a tremendous generation. In the next forty years humanity is going to face and answer some of the most momentous questions in its history. We propose to have a hand in the big business of our time. Do you think that we are going to line up with the church? Look at the questions over which the church is fighting—

the inerrancy of ancient documents, the credibility of this or that event two thousand years past, the literal or loose acceptance of confessions of faith written by men like ourselves centuries ago, or apostolic succession and the administration of the sacraments. These are not the real problems on which the weal or woe of humanity for centuries depends. If the church with unanimous enterprise were seeking to make Jesus Christ and all that he represents dominant in the personal and social life of men, that would be great business. If Christianity meant that, we should want to be Christians and should count it the greatest honor of our lives to be even a little worthy of the name. But the church does not seem to be chiefly intent on that aim. Once more she is deflecting the attention of people from the real problems of our time.

That is the serious and severe thing that many high-minded youth are thinking about denominational Christianity.

The determined desire of the liberals is to meet that charge by an adequate reformation of current religion which passes under the name of Christianity but often does not deserve it. Jesus Christ is to us the best gift of God to men, and the vital acceptance of him and his message is the door into richness of life for the individual and into progressive welfare

for society. To make his faiths and ideals controlling in men's lives seems to us the supreme task, as its consummation would be the supreme salvation. Nothing else centrally matters except that; everything else that matters at all gains its importance only as it contributes to that.

Such, I take it, are the two chief aims of Christian liberals: to think the great faiths of the Gospel through in contemporary terms, and to harness the great dynamics of the Gospel to contemporary tasks. If that be heresy the orthodox will have to make the most of it. For like a member of the Westminster Assembly long ago, we are praying, "O God, we beseech Thee to guide us aright, for we are very determined."

THE DANGERS OF MODERNISM

I

Partisan loyalty is one of the easiest and cheapest virtues to acquire in any realm, and in religion, as our denominational situation long has shown, it is so cheap and easy that in its results it is hardly distinguishable from vice. Just now some of its unhappy consequences are seen in the strained relations between the fundamentalists and modernists. Men are reluctantly but, under present conditions, quite inevitably being forced into one group or the other. Then, wearing a tag, they must display it; following a banner, they must be true to it; their party becomes a 'cause'; and at last they achieve the *summum bonum* of all partisanship—the ability to believe everything evil about the other side and everything good about their own. Half of our fiery controversies would die out for lack of fuel if it were not for that sort of partisanship. In the present juncture of religious affairs, in particular, few things are more needed than fundamentalists

with some honest doubts about fundamentalism and modernists with some searching misgivings about modernism.

One of our leading American liberals has recently summed up the present situation as a division between "arid liberalism" and "acrid literalism." The trouble with that statement is that there is so much uncomfortable truth in it. Modernists are naturally alive to the reprehensible qualities of the "acrid literalism" which is alienating large areas of intelligent youth from Christianity; but one of the most beneficent enterprises in which any modernist can now engage is the painstaking and perhaps painful facing of his own party's glaring faults —and, above all, the notorious spiritual aridity of some of our liberalism.

The perils into which modernism commonly runs are inevitably associated with the sources from which it springs. For one thing, the liberal movement in religion is a protest against the fundamentalist assault upon intelligence. That assault is real and dangerous. If it should succeed it would bring on a twentieth-century replica of the dark ages in religion. In Geneva, Switzerland, I recently read in one

of the leading journals of the city an article on the situation in America, in which the public was informed that the fundamentalists had "succeeded in prohibiting in all the universities and schools of the state of New York the teaching of the theories of Einstein." Doubtless, that is a mere journalistic inference from our experiment in Tennessee, but it does help an American to feel the shocked amazement with which the intelligence of the rest of the world regards our present orgy of medievalism.

Modernism feels acutely the danger of this situation, sees clearly—as it began to see long before this present crisis came—that the divorce of religion from intelligence is fatal to religion. The application of historical methods to the understanding of the Bible, painstaking, unprejudiced research into the development of Christianity and its institutions, the sympathetic study of other religions, hospitality to modern science even when that means discarding old forms of thought, the restatement of religious experience in terms of new views of the world, the endeavor to apply Christian principles to contemporary social situations—all these typical activities of modernism spring

from the desire to preserve a cordial alliance between religion and intelligence.

That this alliance must be fought for if we are not to lose it seems clear, and the fundamentalists have no one but themselves to blame for the insistence with which modernists force the issue. A short time ago in New York, a prominent fundamentalist brought a mass meeting of his fellows to tumultuous cheers by the climactic assertion, "I would rather have my son learn his A B C's in heaven than know his Greek in hell." Well, who wouldn't? But why the dilemma? Why this constant intimation that education and Christianity are incompatible? It was not a small man, but the most towering fundamentalist figure of this generation, who insisted before thousands of audiences from coast to coast that it was more important to know the Rock of Ages than the ages of the rock. Who doubts it? But why the contrast? Why this tireless insinuation that an intelligent man who knows the ages of the rock cannot know the Rock of Ages too? The nemesis of this sort of thing is already upon us in many of our youth who believe what they are being told and, not willing

to forswear intelligence, are surrendering Christianity.

This, then, is one of the major origins of modernism. It takes up the cudgels for intelligence in religion. The central interest of many a modernist minister more and more gathers at that point. In his idealistic and spiritually minded youth his dominant ambition in religion may have been to keep fellowship with God and be a channel for new life to men, but now it gravitates increasingly toward one end—he does wish to stand for modern intelligence in his community. And there, where one of his greatest virtues lies, is also his pitfall. A fundamentalist minister who, with all his fundamentalism, loves men and is centrally interested in the inward life which men live with God and their own consciences, will do much more good than a modernist who, in desperately trying to be modern, forgets what religion is all about.

Here arises that "arid liberalism" which, after all, is fundamentalism's best friend. Becoming a modernist because he believes that real religion and the scientific view of the world are not incompatible, a man proceeds diligently

and zealously to set forth the scientific view of the world, as though, if people would only believe in evolution, the reign of law, the new psychology, the historical method of dealing with sacred literatures, and other such matrices of modern thought, religion would be safely preserved for the future generations. But that is a foolish reliance. Such mental frameworks, whether old or new, are not the deep springs from which religion rises in the human heart. St. Francis of Assisi had world-views that any child in a grammar school could easily correct, but that did not prevent his being a glorious saint, and many a modern man is as up-to-date as the last news from the laboratory can make him but that does not prevent his being an abysmal pagan.

Indeed, one can push this statement farther. The fundamentalists are right in thinking that assiduously acquired knowledge is often a positive burden on spontaneous, creative, spiritual life. That is a startling statement of Ruskin that "Raphael painted best when he knew least." Take it with a grain of salt, as one must generally take Ruskin's sweeping aphorisms, but, for all that, truth is there. After his

glorious early work Raphael nearly ruined himself trying to imitate Michelangelo and acquire the latest Renaissance style. If by 'knowing' one means his strenuous endeavor to acquire the mode of Renaissance Rome, then it is true that Raphael did paint best when he knew least.

That sort of thing is true of many a liberal preacher. He is so anxious to be rational that he forgets to be religious. For religion is not created, saved, nor propagated by the rationality of its thought-forms, much as that ought to help. Religion's central and unique property is power to release faith and courage for living, to produce spiritual vitality and fruitfulness; and by that it ultimately stands or falls. That is the bread which man's hunger tirelessly seeks in religion and will accept in every conceivable form of thought, from Roman Catholic veneration of the saints to the metaphysics of Mrs. Eddy. If as modernists we believe that we have rational world-views as vehicles for our faith, well and good. I agree. Moreover, we must not trim about the matter and, if need be, must fight for liberty within the churches to think the priceless ex-

periences of religion through in terms that modern-minded people comprehend. But to rely on our mere modernism for the furtherance of vital religion, with which we should be preëminently concerned, is absurd. The issue of that is desiccation and barrenness. Liberal Christianity will never win the day merely because it is intelligent but because, being intelligent, it proves able in this new generation to inspire ardent faith in God, open men's lives to his sustaining companionship, make Christ and all that he stands for the burning center of imagination and devotion, release men from the tyranny of fear, sickness, and sin, create robust, serviceable character, transform social, economic, international life, produce saints, martyrs, prophets, and apostles worthy to stand in the succession of those long acknowledged by the Church Universal.

Such is the test of any Christianity, and modernism need expect no special favors. Our chief enemy is not "acrid literalism." That cannot last. The stars in their courses fight against that Sisera. Our chief enemy is "arid liberalism."

II

Modernism has another origin in profound dissatisfaction with the present denominational situation. The nearly two hundred sects into which the Christian movement in America is to-day divided present a spectacle at once so pathetic and so ridiculous that Christian people who deeply care about the fortunes of religion cannot be expected to be silent. To be sure, it is easy in general to defend denominationalism. Are not differences of opinion inevitable? Are not political parties and schools of medicine diverse and various? Why, then, expect religion to exhibit a tranquil, undifferentiated unity?

That sort of generality, however, misses the real issue. Nobody should expect that any magic of Christian charity or comprehensive organization will subdue the diversities of religious thought and bring in an era of theological and ecclesiastical unanimity. If for a day such a heavenly consequence could be achieved, the next morning would see the trouble start again —the placid surface of artificial unity would

crack into new fissures. As far ahead as we can see there will be denominations.

What has that to do, however, with the defense of these existent sects? Parties in politics, medicine, law or religion that represent living issues serve an indispensable function; but parties that represent nothing worthy of serious thought, that persistently endeavor to galvanize into life issues properly dead generations ago, that waste the loyalties of men, crucially needed for large matters, on trivial discriminations of belief and practice which have no consequence one way or another in personal and social character—what can be said in defense of them?

Wearing hooks and eyes but not buttons, being baptized with much water, not with little, excluding preachers, however gifted with prophetic power, who are not ordained in tactual apostolic succession, signing, even though one interpret it to shreds, the Westminster Confession or some other ancient creed as a *sine qua non* of being a minister, modeling church government on direct rather than representative democracy or vice versa—such matters underlie most of our present divisions. Will

some one please rise up to explain just what pertinent relationship these things have to the deep spiritual needs of men and the moral welfare of the nation?

Not all who feel the shame of this situation are modernists, but all modernists feel the shame of this situation. It is one of the characteristic marks of modernism to care little or nothing for present denominational divisions, to think them negligible, even contemptible, to wonder how intelligent people can be excited over them when such tremendous issues face Christian thought and such challenging causes call for Christian loyalty. Once New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut were engaged in bitter tariff disputes, were divided by unappeasable jealousies, and almost came to open war. But now, when the real issue is America's relationship with the international progress of the world, who would dream of laboriously whipping up old controversies like that in politics? Yet our denominations are most expensively and deliberately doing just that sort of thing in religion.

Such in general is a typical modernist's attitude and once more his virtue is likely to be his

undoing. For he is always tempted to turn his back on a situation so deplorable. If he is strong enough he may lead a schism, conducting a group of churches out of an old sect—only to face this singular nemesis that, if in this protest against denominationalism he succeeds, he founds a new denomination. Or if he is not strong enough for that, he is likely to become an isolated individualist, like Kipling's cat "walking by his wild lone," careless of Christianity's organized expressions, contemptuous of those now existent, and not statesmanlike enough to plan hopefully for anything better. So out of modernist virtue comes modernist vice, and by another route men who ought to be the hope of the churches land in "arid liberalism."

The fault in this attitude is primarily lack of insight. There is a great deal more in these old denominations than the trifling peculiarities which ostensibly distinguish them. Around them and their traditions, their ways of worship, their habits of thought have gathered much of the finest spiritual quality and moral devotion that we have to rely upon. These churches have become more than the items of their creeds

and policies that can be reckoned up and counted; they have become to multitudes of people symbols of spiritual life, shrines of household memories and personal loyalty. Their wreck would involve much dependent flower and foliage, well worth preserving, which is growing on them. To forget this is always the temptation of the radical. It was not a preacher but a professor at Columbia who recently commented on those extremists who "combine a singular sense of the literal absurdities of religious forms with a marked insensibility to their symbolic values." Let modernists take note! It is one thing to recognize that a water-bucket is outmoded; it is another to appreciate that it still may carry living water.

I felt this recently about a form of religious thought and practice as far as possible removed from my own, when, sitting in a Roman Catholic church, I watched a very young girl trying to teach her still younger brother to say his prayers before the altar. It was an impressive sight. It would have been impressive even if one of Bellini's glorious madonnas, from above the altar, had not held out a radiant Christ-

Child to the kneeling children. As it was, one easily could have wept to see symbolized there that deep virtue in Catholicism which Protestantism has so largely lost—prayer from our infancy up as an habitual discipline of the soul, the daily use of the churches for prayer, where rich and poor, old and young, come one by one to renew their fellowship with the surrounding, impinging, friendly, unseen world of saints and angels.

Nothing is to be done in this realm by scorn. No one is fit to handle these questions who has not learned the fine art of reverencing other people's reverences. That is a lesson which impatient modernists need commonly to learn.

The liberal movement in Christianity never can expect to arrive at any hopeful conclusion until it thus quits its superciliousness about the churches and, without abating one jot of its conviction about their follies, sets itself resolutely to build out of them the kind of church that this new generation needs. If it can do that it will win. If it cannot do that or refuses to try, it will evaporate. Its vagueness and nebulosity are its chief popular handicaps now; but wherever some church breaks through

the exclusive features of its own denominationalism, supersedes them, becomes inclusive of the community's best spiritual life and so exerts a dynamic force for real Christianity which no right-minded person in the town can gainsay, there liberalism gets a local habitation and a name. That is an argument understood of the people. And to do that requires patience, sympathy, courage, and hard work to a degree that evidently overtaxes the resources of some modernists.

They try an easier road. Ministers and laymen, they quit. From outside any active responsibility for the churches they pour contempt upon the folly of denominations. Or else they try on paper to construct some ideal, theoretical church union, some grandiose scheme of universal creed and comprehensive organization that will include everybody—a method of procedure which, however educational in some of its effects, will never actually work. One way or another, too many modernists are evading the tasks of patient churchmanship in local communities.

The continuance of that means ruin to the liberal cause. There are no short-cuts to great

ends. The overpassing of our present ignoble denominationalism and the achievement of inclusive churches which will pave the way for ultimate unity on a larger scale, means tireless, persistent work and experimentation in local fields. Unless modernists see that clearly, the fundamentalists will wipe them off the religious map. The liberals are vehemently critical of the present churches; they are amply justified, but that is not the test. Can they themselves build churches that will meet the needs of this new generation, become shrines of devotion, centers of spiritual inspiration and practical service, worthy, as our children shall see them in retrospect, to be part of the "holy Church throughout all the world"? That is the test.

The sum of the whole matter is this: modernism up to date has been largely a movement of protest and criticism. It has originated in reaction against obscurantist assaults on Christian intelligence and against the continuance of meaningless denominational divisions. It inevitably has the faults of its qualities, but it is high time it recovered from them. If it is to serve any abiding purpose it must pass

through protest to production, through criticism to creation. Whenever it does that, it wins. The most effective Christian churches that I know to-day are manned by liberals. Multiply such and the day is won.

THE NEED OF MODERN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

I

One of our American philosophers has recently written that "no great civilization has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith." That being true, the present upset, cantankerous and unhealthy state of religion in this country ought to be a matter of concern to all public-spirited minds. Religion is much more than a matter of conflicting sects and theologies; more even than a matter of individual piety; it is a public question of profound import.

No society ever has been healthy whose religious life was unhealthy. Even those who are impatient of contemporary formulations of faith, those who are outside the churches and alienated from their denominational loyalties, should still be deeply concerned about the fortunes of religion. A society which, providing for the future, builds great factories, immense railroad systems, and even innumerable schools, but does not care whether the future has a

wholesome religious life, is playing a fatally short-sighted game.

In view of this fact, the situation which we face is serious. Much of our contemporary Christianity is not making people better, but worse. It accentuates bitterness, brings out meanness, sanctions ignorance and bigotry, divides those who might else be brotherly, and lapses from its high possibilities into a force for spiritual deterioration and decay. That religion can thus become a curse and not a blessing is obvious. Religious faith, when it is in earnest, is very powerful. It puts behind men the most comprehensive motive that can sway them—the consciousness of obeying the eternal will. It leads men up to ways of thinking, acting, treating their fellows, and assures them that these are laws of God.

When, now, this religious dynamic furnishes driving power for beneficent living, it is a blessing; but when it is belted into the wrong factors in personal character and social life, the consequences are disastrous.

War in itself is bad enough, but a "holy war," where the sanctions of religion are added to other motives for mutual hatred and slaugh-

ter, is the worst of all. Ignorance is always deplorable, but when through religion it becomes superstition, it gains a penetrating influence and an obdurate persistence that ordinary ignorance cannot attain. Prejudice is a common human fault, but it never is so malevolent as when, metamorphosed by religion into bigotry, it becomes a sacred duty. Obscurantism is almost universal; all men in some realm find it difficult to welcome progress; but when religion makes it a virtue, when men refuse the new boon of anesthetics because God decreed man's suffering, or denounce efforts after international peace because the Bible says "Ye shall hear of wars," or refuse to believe evolution true because the first chapter of Genesis does not teach it, or scorn scientific eugenics because control of life's creative energies is God's business, not ours, obscurantism is elevated into a holy obligation. The most deplorable attitudes and actions are constantly reenforced by religion, and some of history's deepest abysses of moral ruin have been reached by those who, as Jesus said, thought that they did God service.

Religion, like electricity, is ambiguous—it

may illumine and warm or it may blast and destroy.

When Saul of Tarsus held the clothes of Stephen while they stoned him, or headed in toward Damascus breathing threatenings and slaughter against the saints of God, what drove him on those bloody errands? Religion. And when he became all things to all men that by all means he might win some, and wrote, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal," what motived that? Strangely enough, that was religion too. Religion can furnish support and sanction to the lowest as well as the highest elements in human character.

This dual possibility in religion was one of the central problems of the Master's ministry. Neither Jesus nor any of his disciples ever met an atheist. He never had to deal with theoretical irreligion. But he had constantly to deal with a low, unethical kind of religion that did people more harm than good.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, where Jesus pictured two men praying in the temple, one boastfully thanking God

that he was not as the rest of men, while the other humbly called on God for pardon and renewal, the Master explicitly contrasted good and bad religion. We may not like that scornful Pharisee, but we must admit that he was a very religious man. A churchgoer, a man of prayer who talked familiarly with God, a grateful spirit, thankful that he was not like other men—he was exceedingly religious. As Jesus intimated, that was the trouble with him; he might have been a fairly decent character if his worst qualities had not been so made sacred by religion. Such appalling consequences follow when religious faith confirms and sanctifies the littleness, meanness and perversity of human character.

Indeed, this paper is being written on the anniversary of the Master's crucifixion. There on the central Cross at Calvary, a sacrifice of illimitable consequence was made for man, and a great religious faith was its motive and sustainment. What force, then, raised the cry "Crucify him!" in Pilate's court, and moved the wagging heads that scoffed at him upon the Cross? Strange duality of effect! That was religion too. It is a significant fact, whose ap-

plication to Christendom has held true ever since, that what crucified Jesus was not irreligion, but bad religion.

II

This ambiguous effect of religion constitutes to-day the crucial problem of the churches. We need a better quality of Christianity within our churches if we are to escape an increasing amount of irreligion outside them, and it is going to take superior religious leadership to get it. No more important crusade for public welfare is afoot than that which seeks a type of Christianity which will make men large not small, sweet not bitter, intelligent not ignorant, better not worse.

For one thing, we need a kind of Christianity that will bring people together instead of tearing them apart. On *a priori* grounds no force in human life ought so to unite men as the religious consciousness that they are children of one Father. Nevertheless, a great deal of our contemporary Christianity constitutes one of the most embittering influences in our society. It does not weave men into a brotherhood; it

does not mollify asperities, prejudices and hatreds; it rather baptizes them so that men indulge freely in their antipathies as a sacred duty.

In the constant endeavor of the churches to persuade men to believe in God there has been an unfortunate forgetfulness of the fact that such belief is one of man's most dangerous practices. When a man takes faith in God seriously, he has accepted a view of life as a whole. If, now, he believes God to be large, generous, and true, his faith is an incalculable benediction. But if he believes God to be small, parochial and mean, his view of life is perverted at its very center and his entire character is the worse for it.

Some people believe in a cruel God who has predestined his children to a hopeless torture chamber, and so their own cruelty toward those of whom they think God disapproves is confirmed and strengthened. Some believe in a tribal God who indulgently has chosen them as favorites, and so their own provincialism and narrow nationalism are deepened and sanctified. Some believe in a sectarian God who, as though he were a Gentile, hates Jews, or, being

a Jew, hates Gentiles; who, as though he were a Protestant, dislikes Catholics, or, as a Catholic, dislikes Protestants; who, being even a Presbyterian, looks askance at Baptists, or, as a Baptist, looks askance at Presbyterians—and so all their own parochialism is made a sacred thing.

Much of our current religion, with its embittering effects, recalls the plaint of an Irishman over his divided country: "If we were all atheists we might live together like Christians."

What Christianity does for some people is evident. It lifts them up to a great altitude. The sharp divisions that on lower levels seem important grow to their eyes diaphanous, transparent. Their fellowship with Christ brings his Golden Rule into luminous illustration in their lives, and his Sermon on the Mount is in them issued in its most attractive edition, bound in a man. Christianity makes some people generous, sympathetic, understanding, fraternal, and kind. What current Christianity, however, is doing for some others is only too clear. "We are going to fight for our convictions," they say. "What we believe is true and all else is a lie, and we must fight

it because it is a lie. The lines must be drawn sharp and clear; your convictions on that side, ours on this."

The difficulty with that attitude does not lie in its insistence on convictions. Any mere kindliness which obscures the convinced love of truth solves no problems. The difficulty is that when Christians stand up for their convictions in that pugnacious and cantankerous mood, they not only do not commend Christianity in general, they do not even commend their own convictions. Who in the end is going to be persuaded of the desirability of convictions which do that to a man's spirit?

Standing up for one's Christian convictions is too serious and sacred a matter to be caricatured. Standing up for one's convictions can be perverted into bigotry, as though a man had first seen the sun through a chink in his log hut and thereafter insisted that no one ever could see the sun except by coming into his hut and looking through the chink. Standing up for one's convictions can degenerate into the trivial sectarianism which now characterizes our denominations. As one witnesses such parochialism and bigotry masquerading under

the sacred egis of loyalty to convictions, one understands anew that the perversion of the best is the worst.

The central problem of the human race today lies in the fact that we are being drawn close together physically while we are still far apart psychologically. The race desperately needs the active help of every force that will break through needless barriers, mollify exasperated antipathies, emphasize social unities, and lift the race over those perilous divisions where physical contact without spiritual understanding means ruin. Of all forces in the world religion ought to be foremost in this service; of all religions Christianity should be first. But much of our contemporary Christianity is not even helping; it is actually making a bad matter worse. It is accentuating old antipathies and creating new ones. It is employing the power which religion possesses to sanctify conduct to divide instead of unite men. This is a serious public matter. We are profoundly in need of a kind of Christianity that will draw men together and not tear them apart.

To be sure, there are communities where the ability of a wisely and generously directed

Christianity to render this indispensable service is being finely exhibited. Such communities, united not divided by their religion, represent one of the great hopes of the church and of the nation. They constitute a challenge to a modern religious leadership that will multiply their number, increase their efficiency and intensify their effect.

Where Jesus himself would stand in this matter seems clear. He would undoubtedly be true to his convictions. He would be that with a rugged and uncompromising honesty which would make his life, if lived again, anything but peaceful. He would not spare his condemnations, although, as of old, they would fall exclusively on the trivialities and hypocrisies of religious leaders who tithe mint, anise, and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law. But the total effect of his ministry would be again to break down barriers, overcome prejudices, dissolve antipathies, and unite men of every tongue, tribe, people and nation, Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free.

This problem of religious prejudice he faced too, and always in one way. He found people

despising the Samaritans for reasons of race and orthodoxy; so he told one of his greatest stories and made a good Samaritan the hero of it. He found people hating Romans as pagans and oppressors; so he discovered one who had an excellent character and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He saw people despising their neighbors, the Sidonians, as heathen; so he went into the synagogue, opened the Scriptures, and said, "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah . . . and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." The central orthodoxy of Jesus was love for all sorts of people, especially for those that other people had a prejudice against. It would be a red-letter day in our generation if our current Christianity could be baptized with a little of the spirit of Christ.

III

Again, we need a type of Christianity that will commend itself to the intelligence by distinguishing between the abiding convictions

and experiences of the Christian life and the temporary forms of thought in which historically they have been set.

In every realm of life there are two sets of elements: those that change continually and those that change little, if at all. This is obvious, for example, in our homes. We have changed our habitations from tents to apartment houses, our clothes from loin-cloths and flowing robes to sack suits and modern garments, our servants from slaves to free laborers, our theories from polygamy to monogamy. Always human life is in transition, and ephemeral elements fade and fall away on every side. Nevertheless, in family life constant elements remain which shift but little with altering circumstances and theory.

Can a greater contrast be imagined than that between Isaac's home and Mark Twain's? Isaac, a Bedouin nomad millenniums ago, living in tents, traveling on camels, enduring the elemental simplicities and hardships of desert life, and Mark Twain, a typical modern, with his far-flung voyages, his university degrees, his household served by all the appurtenances of applied science—the contrast is sharp and

clear. Yet put side by side the love stories of the two men, and one's judgment changes. Here is Isaac's rememberable experience: "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her." And here is Mark Twain's love story as he himself phrased it: "No man and woman really know what perfect love is until they have been married a quarter of a century."

Differences between two such homes are many and deep, but how they dwindle in the radiance of that reproducible experience!

Exactly the same thing is true in religion. Religion's garments, its habitations, its intellectual formulations, its theological vehicles are now and always have been in habitual flux. But at the heart of religion are the abiding and reproducible experiences of the soul, with itself, with its fellows, with its God. They bind the Christian centuries together; they make Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Wesley, Beecher our spiritual brothers in spite of all the differences that separate us; they can be repeated in all ages under all circumstances, with many sorts of intellectual formulations.

Paul and Phillips Brooks were far apart in time and thought. Paul was trained at the feet of Gamaliel, and Phillips Brooks was trained in Harvard. Paul had behind him the background of orthodox Judaism, and Phillips Brooks had behind him the background of Puritan Boston. Paul was a citizen of the first century and thought in terms of cosmology, sociology, eschatology, and theology of his time, and Phillips Brooks was so much a liberal, even for the nineteenth century, that he was bitterly hated and opposed by conservative churchmen of his day. Yet if Paul and Phillips Brooks should ever meet, as perhaps they have met, they would find in common the deepest elements of their religious lives.

They both had found God in Christ and lived overarched and undergirded by his presence. They both had found sin's forgiveness and sin's conquest and had known a conscience void of offense toward God and man. They both had found in Christ the one who fascinated their adoration, commandeered their ambitions, determined their purposes so that they both could say, "To me to live is Christ." They both had entered into the treasuries of Christian prayer

and had found available resources for every day's common needs. They both had found in the Gospel power to build character, humble, honest, courageous, serviceable, which in the place where God put them made a radiance that other men could walk by. And they both had passed out through death with open eyes that saw across the river the fields where the shining ones do commonly congregate.

The abiding factors that unite two far-separated Christian characters like Paul and Phillips Brooks are not the shifting formulations of theology, but the reproducible experiences of the soul. These are the creative forces in Christianity. From them have come our churches, creeds, rituals, and from them new churches, creeds, and rituals will come when old ones grow obsolete. For institutional and theological expressions of religion are its secondary elements, necessarily ephemeral now as they always have been, while the abiding *continuum* of Christianity remains in the repeatable experiences which are religion's life.

The problem of religion for the younger generation to-day is largely bound up with the clear perception of this truth. There are many

youths to-day, as always, whose alienation from Christianity is fundamentally moral, not intellectual; they are too vulgar, flippant, selfish, and carnal to be Christians. Nevertheless, at its best, youth to-day is not irreligious. Within living memory religion never was more mooted, never discussed more frankly, freely and earnestly on college campuses than it is to-day. But the new generation is unquestionably unconventional in its religion. Over increasingly wide areas it refuses to accept the old formulations or be reverent toward the old churches. It wants the life, but it will not accept it phrased in theologies that insult intelligence and in institutions that advertise in every distinctive emphasis of their denominational peculiarities that they are alien from this generation's real problems and real needs. So far as the continuance of religion as a dominant motive in the life of intelligent youth is concerned, no more important enterprise is afoot than the endeavor to think and speak to this new generation about the reproducible experiences of the Christian Gospel in terms which the new generation can understand.

Nevertheless, many people are having great

difficulty in making this plain discrimination between the abiding convictions and experiences of religion and its historic formulations. They do not see that religion is a crustacean and that repeatedly a shell forms over it which, at first a serviceable instrument, becomes a fatal limitation. They identify the shell with the life. They try to keep the shell, supposing it indispensable to the life. They fear as dangerous innovators those who insist on sloughing off the shell and building a new one in order to preserve the life. They do not see that you never can keep life if you do not let it grow.

A long step forward toward a renewal of effective religion among our youth will be taken when once it is clearly recognized that the vital core and abiding *continuum* of Christianity should be found, not in its constantly shifting frameworks of thought but in the reproducible experiences and convictions which our fathers thought about in their terms, which we are determined to think about in our terms, and which our children's children should have liberty to think about in their terms.

In Nottingham, England, is the Wesleyan

chapel where William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was converted. A memorial tablet keeps fresh in recollection the fact that there this notable friend of the friendless received his baptism of spiritual power. Naturally, the chapel has become a shrine of pilgrimage for Salvation Army leaders from around the world. One day an aged colored man in the uniform of the Army was found by the minister of the chapel standing with uplifted eyes before the tablet.

"Can a man say his prayers here?" he asked.

"Of course," was the minister's answer, "a man can say his prayers here."

And the old Salvation Army officer went down on his knees and, lifting his hands before the tablet, prayed, "O God, do it again! Do it again!"

That prayer is the touchstone of abiding reality in religion. The reproducible experiences concerning which men can pray across the centuries, in all sorts of mental settings, "Do it again!" are the vital elements. Most of the things we have controversies over are not reproducible experiences; they are questionable historic events that nobody wants re-

peated: they are theories, formulations of historic theology, abstractions that will not affect in the least the richness, abundance, fruitfulness of any man's spiritual life. They are not the core of religion. But to know the Unseen as an inward Friend, to be baptized by Christ with the ideal of service, to find in the available energies of the Spirit power for life so that what we ought to do we can do and what we must stand we can endure—O God, do it again!

Such repeatable experiences constitute vital religion, and to undertake the framing and presentation of them for this new generation in terms of thought that this generation can understand is an indispensable enterprise calling for the highest qualities of religious leadership.

IV

Finally, we need a kind of Christianity that will send men out courageously to apply their Christian principles to our social, industrial, and international order, instead of soothing them to sleep with sentimental optimism born of a false trust in God.

One of the most considerable criticisms of contemporary religion comes not from skeptics, materialists, intellectual rebels, but from devoted servants of the common good who are trying to make this world a more decent place for man to live in. What they often say is that our current Christianity is making some people lazy, useless, soft, foolishly optimistic and therefore socially apathetic, whereas without their religion they might have been intelligently serviceable.

The explanation of this serious charge—the more serious because of the quality of the people that it comes from—is not difficult to see. Our Christian idea of God is very beautiful. We reach it by lifting up the noblest qualities of character we know and affirming them of God. We take the finest adjectives we can lay our minds on—merciful, gracious, good, kind, righteous—and, raising them to the superlative degree, we affix them to our idea of God. Then we believe that this universe was made and is being managed by this unspeakably good God and by him will be brought to its triumphant destiny.

One possible consequence of such faith is

immediately evident. If this universe is in the hands of such a being, why should we worry about it? If Omnipotent Goodness is in charge of creation, why is not the most complete and happy optimism about everything entirely justifiable? Religion so taken becomes an armchair philosophy. People nestle comfortably in it and doze off, trusting God. This, so some high-minded social servants say, is the lamentable effect of much popular religion, and seeing what problems face us affecting the destiny of humankind for centuries ahead and never to be solved without patient, intelligent, sustained thought and toil, they do not rely on popular Christianity to help; they fear it instead, as a soporific.

Of course, a vigorous protest against this charge is possible. Some of us would say that trusting God at its best has not meant somnolence, but that from it have come the most splendid courage and aggressive consecration that history has seen. We should insist that real faith is not an anodyne, an anesthetic, but, as Jesus said, a mountain-mover. We should be sure that Christians at their best have trusted God as mariners trust the magnetic

pole, not as an excuse for relaxed effort, but as a basis for hazardous exploits; that they have trusted God as a nation trusts a great leader, in a crucial time, not as a pillow to recline upon, but as a standard around which to rally and stand strong.

All this, I think, is true, but we face here another exhibition of our thesis, that while religion going right is a powerful benediction, going wrong it is a dangerous influence. Listen to some public servant impatient with the lamentable apathy of Christians who make trust in God an excuse and not a challenge, as he honestly speaks his mind:

> Multitudes of you Christians are using faith in God as a bed to sleep upon. When you meet social ills demanding concentrated thought and work, you are not deeply disturbed; you trust God. When you face international situations like those through which we now lightly trip to possible perdition, you are not deeply and sustainedly concerned; you trust God. Even if, during the week, we do wake you up by poignant revelations of social need, there is always Sunday in the church, light through stained windows, soothing music, and a comfortable sermon on the goodness of God to put you to sleep again. In the Kremlin, at Moscow, over against an old shrine

where millions of worshipers have habitually come, is hanging now a banner with a motto from Karl Marx, "Religion is the opiate of the people." If we could refuse recognition to Moscow religiously, as we can politically, that might not worry us, but that banner's motto says what an increasing number of our own youth are tempted to think. Why, they say, forty-six million Christians in the United States and so little crusading for the principles that Jesus Christ lived and died for? Why this half-ruined and belligerent Western world after nearly two thousand years of so-called Christianity with its trust in God? No more of that kind of faith which lulls us to sleep with sentimental optimism because God is good.

This mood of protest against false religion is deepening in the very people who most would value and profit by true religion, and the call for a modern religious leadership that will cease misusing trust in God is acute and clamorous. We cannot trust God to break his own laws. We cannot trust God to keep a ship off the rocks when the mariner has missed his reckoning. We cannot trust God to save a railroad train from wreck when the engineer has run past his signals. We cannot trust God to keep us in health when we break the laws of health. We cannot even trust God to make

our children Christians if we neglect their religious education. This is true and it ought to be true, but it makes the business of living a stern enterprise. In particular, we cannot trust God to save any society or nation or civilization whose members are not exercising intelligent, public-spirited, sacrificial consecration in the solution of its problems. Our fathers would have put that truth into austere language. They would have said that God is good indeed, but that, for all that, men and nations can go to hell. Our fathers, with their sterner creed, were less tempted than we are to make a pillow of their faith. What is more, our fathers had severe truth behind their words. This is no foolproof universe. You cannot trust God to save negligent, careless, lazy, idle, and foolish men and societies.

A Christianity that will face social problems, accept the challenge of Jesus Christ, take him seriously, believing with him that the universe is spiritually grounded and purposed and that his ideals can be wrought out in a kingdom on earth where God's will is done as it is in heaven—that is one of the supreme tasks of modern religious leadership. It is a costly un-

dertaking. It means a crusade for a warless world and for an economic order which values personality more than money, and counts public service a higher aim than private profits. But no other kind of Christianity is adequate for the world's need. Faith in God in the New Testament is not an anesthetic; it is the victory that overcometh the world. To recover that kind of faith is one of the supreme needs of contemporary religion.

Such is the call for a modern religious leadership. It ought to challenge our best youth. The nation's life never will be healthy until such goals have been achieved. A Christianity that, retaining its abiding spiritual values, increases capacity for co-operation, takes intelligent account of new truth, and tackles the serious problems of personal character and social relationships is a *sine qua non* of real prosperity in America.

THE NEW RELIGIOUS REFORMATION

I

Probably the first appropriate remark is that there is very little new about it. Religion, which in its vital origins is like a spring, is continually being cluttered with débris, stopped by its own sediment, impeded by accumulations from without, and the history of religion reveals the repeated necessity of clearing out the spring again and letting its waters flow freely. Christianity, for example, began with a few disciples keeping company with their Master and learning how to live. They recited no creeds, they enforced no sacraments, they belonged to no formal organization. Then the Master went away and the tremendous forces of history took hold on the movement which he so vitally had begun. Under pressure of necessity Christians built great organizations, elaborated formal creeds, symbolized their experience in impressive rituals; and as Christianity thus developed, a danger, little present

at the first, grew imminent and menacing. Folk could now indulge in second-hand Christianity. They could join an organization, recite a creed, perform a ritual, take the secondary and derived expressions of Christian experience without partaking of the experience itself. They could substitute the outward symbol for the inward life, the formula for the fact. All through Christian history, therefore, the gist of every vital reformation has been the endeavor to recover the freshness of spiritual experience again, regain the spontaneity and vigor of the soul's immediate awareness of the divine Presence, brush through the accumulated débris of conventionalized religion to the living fountains of the spirit from which all true religion comes.

If, then, we need a religious reformation today, there is essentially nothing new about it. It is the same kind of reformation which the Master brought into the formal and stereotyped religion of his time. One immediate problem in the Master's ministry was the contrast between vital Judaism as he had doubtless found it in his home in Nazareth, and conventional Judaism as it was exhibited in the official

religion of his generation. The pattern of formal Judaism in Jesus' time is easily summarized: the Jews are the true people of God; to be a son of Abraham, to be circumcised, and to keep the law are the assurance of salvation; the rabbis have the Scriptures, which are inspired, and, as well, the traditions of the elders which explain what the Scriptures mean; if a man believes what the rabbis teach and does what the law commands, he is a faithful Jew, and in the good time coming when God will punish his enemies and reward his friends those who are saved will be in paradise while the rest are damned. That was conventionalized Judaism. It was far from the vital religion of the great prophets crying, like Micah, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It was the saddest of all sights, religion grown cold and congealed into rigid forms.

There is, however, nothing in such conventionalized religion which should sound unfamiliar to a Christian. We are surrounded by it on every side. Put church for synagogue, baptism for circumcision, New Testament for Old, the creeds of the church for the traditions

of the elders, the clergy for the rabbis, heaven for paradise and hell for Sheol, and you have conventionalized Christianity. They have changed the cloth, but it is cut to the same old pattern. Yet it was against such stereotyped religion, with its lack of human sympathy, its exclusiveness and its hypocrisy, that Jesus hurled his most terrific denunciations, and the struggle against it led his footsteps by inevitable paths to Calvary.

This perennial necessity of recovering liberty and movement in religion, of thawing out its frozen forms, restoring spontaneity and creativeness again and so replacing static rigidity, which is death, by freedom and progress, which are life, is the clear lesson of all religious history whether in Christendom or out of it. The process always is disturbing, but a religion which lacks the vitality to attempt it, which no longer has creative powers strong enough to grow impatient of old formulations and to cast them off when they are obsolete, is already as good as dead. The power of reformation is to religion what the power of recuperation is to health.

II

There are many ways in which the new reformation might be described, but in this essay it will be presented in a single contrast: the religion of Jesus as distinguished from the religion about Jesus. No dilemma is intended here, as though a Christian, choosing one, must give up the other, but a clear contrast is intended without which some of the most distinctive elements in contemporary religious thought cannot be understood.

There are two types of Christianity. One is the religion which Jesus Christ himself possessed and by which he lived, his filial fellowship with God, his purity, unselfishness, sincerity, sacrifice, his exaltation of spiritual values, and his love for men—the religion of Jesus. The other consists of things said of and believed concerning Jesus, theories to account for him, accumulated explanations and interpretations of him—the religion about Jesus.

The religion of Jesus wells up in beautiful souls from St. John to Whittier, in strong souls like Savonarola or Hugh Latimer; and in multitudes of obscure but lovely people his

spirit, his life of trust in God and love for men, his courage and his kindliness return, and the Master's religion itself comes back again. But always woven with this first kind of Christianity is the religion about Jesus. It consists of theories concerning his preëxistence, birth, miracles, physical resurrection and return, theologies concerning his metaphysical relationship with God, his atonement on the Cross, his presence in the sacraments.

The Christianity of any generation is a blend of these two interwoven strands, and one of the most readily distinguishable and most influential movements of our time springs from the desire somehow to escape from the too-great dominance of an inherited religion about Jesus and to recover for our modern life the major meanings of the religion which he himself possessed.

Let us once for all guard ourselves here against misunderstanding. One does not mean that to a Christian who adores Jesus theories about him are avoidable or valueless. We inevitably seek intelligible explanations of anything that interests us deeply. The important matter in the sun's relationship to us is its

light and heat. These blessed men before there were any theories about them. They blessed men when folk looked up in ignorant wonder at the sky or thought the sun a chariot driven by a god. But, for all that, we value our astronomical explanations. They do clear matters up. We rightly wish to understand anything that shines on us like the sun.

So, too, a thoughtful Christian who falls under the spell of the Master's life, feels his radiance and surrenders to his influence, will wish to understand him, will try to set him in intelligible relationship with the rest of his knowledge, and so inevitably will have a religion about him. History, however, makes obvious the danger lurking in this process. The legitimate desire for intelligible explanations can deteriorate into contentment with conventional formulas. Interpretations of Jesus, cut to pattern, can become stereotyped, can be inherited, learned by rote, and required by orthodoxy, until an official religion about Jesus covers, smothers, and all but destroys the religion of Jesus. That obviously is happening to-day. Statisticians tell us that there are 576,000,000 Christians on this planet—com-

menting on which a secular journal recently remarked that we sometimes have our hours of depression when we wonder where they live. What explains this discrepancy in Christendom between the number of Christians on the one side and on the other the inefficiency of Christianity to transform society and save the world? Surely, the explanation centers in this crucial fact: multitudes of so-called Christians have not the religion of Jesus, not his spirit, his inner fellowship with the Unseen, his reverence for personality, his magnanimity, his sincerity, his courage, and his love. They do not even think of Christianity in terms of the religion of Jesus. They have a religion about Jesus. They suppose that that is Christianity. As a matter of fact, one cannot so have a religion about Jesus that by itself it will make him a Christian. A man is vitally and inwardly a Christian only to the degree in which he himself possesses the kind of religion which Jesus Christ possessed.

III

The contrast between these two types of Christianity throws instructive light on the

restless spirit now abroad in the churches. The present disturbed condition of America's religious life presents a serious problem. The failure of old restraints and the impotence of old dogmatisms, the obvious futility of sectarian alignments to represent contemporary issues, the aggressiveness of impatient radicals, the defensive militancy of reactionaries, and the general confusion and bewilderment, are symptoms of inevitable change. Many factors conspire to cause this situation. Many influences are seeking to guide and use it. There is no neat formula that will explain it all and no facile solution that will resolve its difficulties. One element in it, however, is full of promise. There is a wide-spread, deep-seated, positive desire on the part of many Christians in all the churches to recover for our modern life, for its personal character and its social relationships, the religion of Jesus as distinguished from the accumulated, conventionalized, largely inadequate and sometimes grossly false religion about Jesus.

Such a phrasing of the reformatory movement in the churches puts the matter in positive terms. It needs to be put that way. Too much

so-called liberalism has been negative. It has been conceived in the spirit of protest and has expressed itself in denials and attacks. So futile and so perilous to real reform is this negative spirit that those who are deeply concerned for a revitalized and powerful Christian movement in this country may divide their fear equally between obscurantists on one side and unspiritual liberals on the other.

The destructive approach to reform which deliberately sets out to clear the ground of the obsolete as preparatory to establishing the new is sometimes explicitly defended. A religious reformation is conceived in terms of a building program where an old brownstone front must be torn down before a modern apartment house can be erected. The whole figure is false. Rather, let a man go out in April to the woods and see the scrub-oak leaves still clinging to the boughs. The bitter cold has fallen, but the leaves still cling. The tempestuous winds have blown, but the leaves are still there. They are old, brown, wizened, dead, but they will not let go. If a man says that there never can be a green and blooming oak until these old leaves are gone, that is true, but the way out is not

destruction. Pick every dead leaf off; you still will have no green and blooming oak. Let the spring come, however, the sun grow warm and the sap rise, and the emergent vitality will push the obsolete away and bring in the new summer so gloriously that destruction will be lost sight of in creation.

That is a true figure of a vital spiritual reformation. It must come from the emergence of an inward, conquering life. Its sloughing off of the old must be incidental to its triumphant creation of the new. Where, then, in this present situation shall we look for that vital Christianity whose emergence shall push the outworn aside and usher the churches into a new day of spiritual power? History answers that question. All the vital reformations in the Christian church have had one common element: the religion of Jesus has pushed its way up through the obscurities and formalities of an accumulated religion concerning him and has taken once more the center of the scene.

That proposition is important enough to deserve illustration.

St. Francis of Assisi represented a real ref-

ormation of spiritual life within the Roman Church. Did not he have a religion about Jesus? Of course he did, but it was not that which distinguished him. His religion about Jesus was identical with that which was held and had been held for centuries by his fellow Catholics. What distinguished him, so that his name shines brightly yet across the centuries, was the reëmergence in him of the life that once was lived in Galilee. In him, afresh, the religion of Jesus appeared—his purity, his care for people, his unpurchasable devotion, his magnanimity, his preference for poverty with spiritual freedom to luxury without it. Folk touching St. Francis felt again the spirit of the Man of Nazareth.

Multitudes, therefore, who knew all that the churches taught about their Lord, eagerly thronged around St. Francis saying, like the Greeks to Philip, the disciple, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

This same proposition holds true about Martin Luther, different from St. Francis though he was. He had a religion about Jesus, but it was not that which distinguished him. His theology about Christ differed little from the

classic formulations which had come down out of the great creeds of the fourth century. What distinguished Luther was something much more dynamic, as one must see who reads his tract on Christian Liberty. It is one of the few primary works of the Reformation, and two propositions are presented in it: First, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none." How Luther trumpeted that! Second, "A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." That is the gist of the Christian's attitude as Luther saw it: free from all men, unafraid of the face of mortal clay, that he may be servant of all men and at the disposal of everyone. That, however, is not primarily a religion about Jesus: that is the way in which Jesus himself actually lived, and it was the vital upthrust of that free, creative spirit which put dynamic power into the Reformation.

The same principle holds true of John Wesley's reformation within Protestantism. The visitor still can see in Bristol, England, the chapel where Wesley first organized his work, the bare boarded rooms where his first theological disciples lived and studied, the small

window through which he used to watch the gathering congregation to see how many vehement antagonists he must expect that night, the pulpit from which he poured out his soul, and the trapdoor through which, it is said, he escaped into a secret passage-way when the mob came in to seize him. Once more, in his case, the religion about Jesus which he stoutly held differed in no wise from that which was stoutly held by millions of his fellow Christians. What distinguished Wesley was something else. In him the religion of Jesus came back again, especially his care for the wayward, neglected, forgotten masses of the people. It was the accent of the Man of Nazareth which the Kingswood colliers heard when they gathered, thousands strong, upon the open hillsides and listened to Wesley until one could see the white lines down their cheeks where the tears chased one another through the grime.

All vital reforms have been thus creative, not negative, and so far as Christianity is concerned, no truer description can easily be found of that force whose emergence again and again has sloughed off the obsolete and welled up in transformed personal character and redeemed

social life than to call it the religion of Jesus. That this process is needed in our churches now seems obvious. They do have a religion about Jesus. They often bristle with that. They often grow bitter and obdurate about that. They often are divided and plunged into controversies by that. And all the time the religion of Jesus suffers loss. One wishes that from every housetop in America one could say in the words of the New Testament, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

IV

It is clear that the new reformation thus understood becomes something more than a matter of changed theological formulations. It needs to be more than that. The unwillingness of reactionary minds to translate the abiding spiritual values of the Christian Gospel out of mental settings no longer tenable by well-instructed thought into categories congenial with the rest of our knowledge is exceedingly perilous to the Christian faith. Those who care most about the continuance of Christianity as

a vital influence in the new generation and who see most clearly the intellectual obstacles now embarrassing our youth when they try to consent to current Christianity will be most eager to achieve this restating of Christian faith in understandable terms. But the new reformation is much more than this challenge to our minds; it is a searching challenge to our consciences. It means the creative living of the principles of Jesus.

Why is it that so many of our ordination councils, where young men entering the ministry are put on trial for heresy before they have begun, seem so utterly to miss the point? Why do they so commonly leave the impression of having failed to get at a young man's real Christianity? An experienced minister recently exclaimed that, just as a bandit holding up a passer-by secures only his small change, the chance possessions carried on his person, and not his bank account, so our ordination councils, holding up young men at the theological pistol point, succeed in getting only their theological small change and miss entirely their real gospel.

The reason for this is clear: many questions

go deeper than any inquiries about conventional orthodoxy can ever go. One often wishes that he could turn on the inquisitors at a heresy trial or an ordination council with questions such as these:

How much of our own Christianity is the religion about Jesus? Where did you get it? You were taught it, were you not? These statements about Jesus you learned from others. They are historic interpretations, have long been written down, can be inherited, learned by rote and recited, so that if you had been born in Japan and not in America you might have been taught to say similar things about Buddha, and your religion then would have been a creed about Buddha instead of a creed about Christ. How much of your Christianity is of that sort—second-hand, derived, the recitation of what others have thought about the Lord? And how much is not of that sort? How much of your Christianity is the vital emergence in you of the spirit of Jesus himself—his life with his own soul, with his fellows, with his God—so that the religion which he possessed you do now by God's grace in some measure inwardly and vitally possess yourself, and know in consequence what Paul meant by his reiterated and glowing theme, "Christ in you"? How much of your Christianity is of that quality and power, and if this young man possesses that inward fire are you sure that you would have Christ's sanction in testing him

by matters which Christ never mentioned and which are alien from anything he ever taught?

It is probably an idle dream, but one wonders if even theological inquisitors might not be moved by such an appeal from formulations about Jesus to the spirit of Jesus.

At any rate, whatever may be the attitude of theological reactionaries toward this appeal, there is no doubt of the challenge which it presents to liberals. If the reformatory movement means this deep and searching matter, it is not an easy enterprise to undertake. Too much liberalism has been easy. It has accepted a change of opinion, but it has not girded itself for a creative spiritual task. Retreating from the austere demands and solemn dedications of an old-fashioned religion, men have fallen back on a cheap and superficial modernity whereby they have tried to escape the rigors, while keeping the comforts, of the faith. "A feather-bed to catch falling Christians" is no caricature of a certain type of liberalism discoverable in our churches.

But this appeal which we are making here allows no such easy-going relaxation of moral vigor and spiritual earnestness to masquerade

as a religious reformation. The fact is that nothing is simpler and less expensive than accepting a religion about Jesus. That can be done by rote. But to enter even a little into the possession of the religion of Jesus, to make that real in personal character and social relationships, is the most searching adventure of the human soul.

V

Indeed, appeal to the religion of Jesus is not intellectually so simple as might at first appear. Literalism and legalism even here can do their deadly work. Jesus himself can be given the kind of verbal authoritativeness against which he fought throughout his ministry. His principles can be made into rules; the forms of thinking of his generation which he shared, such as the explanation of diseases by demonic possession, can be regarded as infallible because he used them; and once more the letter can slay the spirit in his case as it has done with every spiritual leader in history. When one appeals across the centuries to the religion of Jesus, one does not mean to ascribe finality even to that, as though God had not

spoken since, as though no new light had broken on the world. If God is not speaking now he never has spoken at all. But one does mean that the Master's way of living is central in Christianity, and that involved in it are convictions, motives, ideals and principles so supreme that Christianity must always regain its strength and refresh its purity at the place where it started—the Master, namely, saying to his disciples, "Follow me."

While, therefore, the appeal to the religion of Jesus does present intellectual problems, questions of historic scholarship not always easy to answer, its chief effect should be mentally clarifying. What happens when a new founder of religion appears in history is evident. He comes with his personality and his gospel, and around the magnetism of his influence his disciples gather. Then he goes away and his followers across the generations formulate his teachings, run them into the molds of successive philosophies and world-views, build up theologies to explain him and weave legends to account for him, until, were he to return, no one would be so surprised at things said and believed concerning him as the founder himself would be.

That happened to Gautama Buddha. His own religion left even the existence of a personal God out of account. His was a deep, inward, and noble religion of self-renunciation, but the existence and availability of God played no part in it. If, therefore, Gautama could walk through China and Japan to-day and see the temples built to his glory, the mythologies rehearsed concerning him, the theologies believed about him, the rituals performed before him—if he who took no account of the existence of God could see himself worshiped as a god, while the religion by which he actually lived is smothered under the accumulated religion about him, his constant plaint would be, "If this is Buddhism, then I am no Buddhist."

A like fate has befallen the Master. Wide areas of his church have left behind them the religion by which he lived and have substituted another kind of religion altogether. An American preacher recently was asked whether a man who perfectly incarnated the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, its inward companionship with God, its unsullied integrity of soul, its unstinted magnanimity and boundless love, would thereby be a Christian, and he em-

phatically said "No!" Christlikeness, that is, so far as some groups in our churches are concerned, no longer is the criterion of Christianity. Something else has been substituted. A religion about Jesus has crowded aside the religion of Jesus, and so far has this gone that one of our well-known theological professors recently declared with unashamed candor that Jesus Christ himself was not a Christian.

A truth is there which that professor did not intend. For if Jesus should come back again to see the things done in his name, hear the creeds rehearsed about him and watch the rituals performed to his glory, his continual cry about much of it would be, "If this is Christianity, then I am no Christian!"

Many of the new generation, therefore, determined to be honest about religion, certain that religion is indispensable and in its deepest meanings true, are rediscovering their Christianity at the very point where the theological professor lost sight of his—in the Master himself. They go to church and listen to the things said, sung, and recited about Jesus. How unreal much of it is! It is derived Christianity twice and thrice removed from its vital origins. But Jesus Christ himself is not un-

real. His fellowship with God, his Good Samaritan, his Golden Rule, his Sermon on the Mount, his law of finding life by losing it, his sincerity, his courage, his kindliness, his Cross—they are not unreal. There one touches directly the supreme exhibition of spiritual life in human history.

If, then, an objector says that any one so adoring Jesus and wishing to share his spirit must have high thoughts about him, that is true. For my part, I have a theology about Jesus, am sure that if one does not find the Divine in that transcendent and crystalline life one will not be likely to find the Divine anywhere, and as the years pass I see more clearly, not less, the light of the knowledge of God's glory in his face. The development of Christian thought across the centuries has its justification in this fact—that one way or another, in terms of congenial thought and current category, the mind is bound not only to adore Jesus, but to interpret him. Wherever the religion of Jesus grows vivid and strong in thoughtful men, it will express itself in a religion about him. But this derived element must not play usurper. Man's thoughts about the Master must not smother the influence

of the Master himself. The obscurantisms and perversions which have cursed and still do curse official Christianity over wide areas of Christendom spring largely from this fatal source.

After all, Christlikeness is the central criterion of Christianity, and to substitute anything else is to ruin Christianity.

In the nation, on a festival like Washington's Birthday, one sees the same process afoot which to-day is forcing the church either to reform or to disintegrate. Thousands of eloquent orations concerning Washington! Multitudes of people easily and glibly patriotic about Washington! One does not desire that the American people should cease to be patriotic about Washington, but the urgent need which, unmet, may yet despoil America of her true glory lies elsewhere. The patriotism of Washington—that is another matter, and it is much more difficult to find.

VI

This emphasis upon the centrality of the spirit of Jesus in Christianity is crucially important, if our modern problems are to be

successfully met. Here is a new generation needing as much as any generation in human history a vital and dynamic faith, but a mere religion about Jesus does not get within reaching distance of our major problems. A man can have a religion about Jesus and harbor bitter racial prejudice; he can have a religion about Jesus and be a rampant militarist, a narrow nationalist, a hard-handed industrial autocrat; he can have a religion about Jesus and be unfit to live with in a home. But no one can have the religion of Jesus and be that.

To be sure, this appeal from inherited formulas to spiritual realities will seem to many revolutionary. Nevertheless, while no movement as radical and spiritual as this can fail to be disturbing, its major and ultimate effect should be uniting. What common ground is there on which the varied sects and churches of Christendom can stand together except this—they all start with and include the religion of Jesus? It is not that which has divided them until their wars and controversies have made Christian history the opposite of Christian and to-day makes their testimony so often weak and fatuous. What has wrought havoc is the insistence on this or that item in

the religion about Jesus as though it were central and indispensable. The Master's spirit has not divided Christians, but insistence on official creeds and sacramental theories and ecclesiastical institutions concerned with Jesus has wrought the sorry work. To recover, therefore, the original centrality of Christian discipleship is not a schismatic and destructive task. It is the only hope of reuniting Christians. At one place only do we stand together —where the religion of Jesus wells up in men of many creeds and churches so that, differing widely in every other respect, they exhibit a like quality of life and are manifestly baptized by the one Spirit. Christlikeness as the criterion of Christianity is not divisive; it is unifying. The more it is made central the more Christians, with all their different formulations of thought and institutions, can worship and work together.

At any rate, the new reformation is quietly but pervasively on its way. Fear it, all those who do not wish Jesus Christ taken in earnest! But no one else need fear it. One of the greatest hours in Christian history will have struck when once more the religion of Jesus takes the center of the scene.

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